

LENINGRAD TO KIEV,

January 27.

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SECRETARIAT**

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DOMINION PREMIERS SIGN AGREEMENT

(Left to Right). GENERAL SMUTS (S Africa), MR. MACKENZIE KING (Canada), MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL, MR. JOHN CURTIN (Australia), and MR. PETER FRASER (New Zealand)

A Record of the War

THE
EIGHTEENTH QUARTER

January 1, 1944—March 31, 1944

PHILIP GRAVES

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P R E F A C E

During the first three months of 1944 military operations in Italy and on the Russo-German front were vigorously pressed by the Allies. The Russian armies won outstanding successes in the Ukraine and south of Leningrad, which was finally released from the German threat. In Italy, although the attack on Cassino failed, the successful landing on the Anzio beaches gave promise of future successes when the time came for a general offensive on this difficult front. In Burma the campaign was reaching a high degree of intensity at the end of the quarter and the Japanese attack on Manipur was a characteristic counter to the attempt of General Stilwell's mainly Chinese forces to expel the invaders from northern Burma and improve communications with China. At sea the campaign against the U-boats was prosecuted with increasing success and the attrition of the Japanese Navy and mercantile marine chiefly by the United States naval and air forces in the Pacific continued. The air attack on Germany gathered still greater strength.

Politically, in spite of official assurances, Allied co-operation was somewhat less complete. Anglo-American relations remained satisfactory, although the American attitude towards the French Liberation Committee promised to give trouble ere long. The unhappy Russo-Polish dispute persisted in spite of British attempts to reconcile the disputants, Eire had a brief moment of importance—or notoriety. There were difficulties between the Allies and other neutral States. But the anxieties of the chief Allied Governments must have fallen far short of those felt by the rulers of Germany, who saw Finland, the most trusted of their satellites, contemplating an armistice with Russia and felt themselves obliged to secure stronger Hungarian support by a military occupation of that country.

The author wishes here to express his indebtedness

to his collaborators. Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. de Watteville has contributed an important analysis of the course of the Russo-German campaign and an appreciation of the causes of the Red Army's victories. Mr. J. H. Freeman has dealt with French and Italian political affairs in the opening section of Chapter VII. The American scene, with special reference to the activities of President Roosevelt and of Mr. Willkie—then apparently destined to be the leading Republican candidate for the Presidency—is described in Chapter VI by Mr. S. L. Righyni. Sir Frank Brown once more deals with Indian affairs, and Mr. Stanley Robinson has described the work of King, Ministers and Parliament in Chapter VIII of this volume. I must also express my thanks to the Service Correspondents of *The Times* for much valuable advice and information and to its indefatigable Map Department.

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CHAPTER I

GRAND ALLIANCE AND AXIS

I: CHIEFLY RUSSIA AND POLAND

During the quarter under review the relations between the Governments and peoples of Great Britain and the United States appeared to have improved steadily in spite of the approach of the Presidential election which always revives the pastime of "twisting the lion's tail." A common language, the acceptance by both nations of certain legal principles and political ideals and, not least, the increasing camaraderie of both armies in the field, furthered this improvement. These factors of understanding were of more importance than anti-British articles published in American newspapers which from isolationist were becoming ultra-nationalist, but had no more than a local and sectional importance.¹ They were far more important than anti-American jests or criticisms circulated by persons who had to keep up a reputation for smartness by emitting unwise cracks or by worthy and unimaginative citizens who forgot that it takes all sorts to make a world and a conscript army, and that for one United States soldier who misbehaved in Britain there were hundreds who were a credit to their nation and their

¹ The British public which was sometimes startled or alarmed by articles published in the United States Press did not realize that no American newspaper, even those most quoted by the correspondents of British newspapers or by the News Agencies had a national importance such as, only to take two British examples, *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* possessed. Speaking generally the New York newspapers only influenced public opinion in New York and the nearer New England States. Newspapers published in Chicago, in Milwaukee, in Philadelphia, and in many other great cities had their spheres of influence and circulation; articles syndicated by this or that newspaper combine were widely read, but it did not follow that they were widely influential. This was just as true of pro-British as of anti-British newspapers. It is arguable, indeed, that the "small town newspapers" have more influence relatively to their circulation than many of the organs with the names at least of which the British reader of Press messages from the United States is familiar.

uniform. There were differences between the Governments on some important questions, e.g. the extent of the recognition to be accorded to the French administration in Algiers, where the British Foreign Office seemed to be keeping step somewhat unwillingly with the State Department which, for reasons that were not explained to the general public, remained averse to any extension of the limited recognition accorded to the Committee of National Liberation after the Quebec Conference.¹ Still, the criticism which this particular American attitude aroused in Great Britain was generally expressed temperately, and when the Governments differed they "agreed to differ" and kept their tempers.

The "sore spot" in inter-Allied relations was the open breach between Poland and the Soviet Union. In spite of attempts at mediation by the British and American Governments it remained unhealed throughout the period under review, and the attitude of the Russian Government and of sections of the Russian Press (which was entirely controlled by the Government) aroused misgivings in the English-speaking countries and still more among the smaller Allies and the neutrals. A record of the statements issued on the subject of Russo-Polish relations and particularly of the eastern frontier of Poland during the quarter may explain this anxiety.

On January 5 the Polish Government in London issued a statement on the relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. The entry of the Soviet forces into Poland had filled the Poles with the hope that their liberation was drawing near.

Poland had been fighting for over four years against the invader at terrible cost without producing a single quisling and always rejecting any form of compromise or collaboration with the aggressor. In no country in the world had the Poles failed to co-operate for the common cause, and the nation was therefore entitled to expect "full justice and redress" when it had been liberated. The first condition of such justice was the earliest re-establishment of Polish sovereign administration in the liberated territories of the Republic of Poland and the protection of the lives and property of Polish citizens. As the only legal spokesman of the Polish nation the Polish Government affirmed "Poland's indestructible right to

¹ *q.v.* *The Sixteenth Quarter*, pp. 73-6 and 88-9. The word "Not" in line 29 of p. 76 should read "Nor."

independence" as confirmed by the principles of the Atlantic Charter and by binding international treaties, the principles of which could not be revised by accomplished facts.

The conduct of the nation during the war had proved that it would never recognize solutions imposed by force. The Government therefore expected that the Soviet Union would not fail to respect the rights and interests of Poland and its citizens. They had therefore instructed the underground authorities in Poland on October 27, 1943, to intensify their resistance to the Germans, to avoid all conflicts with the Soviet armies entering Poland and to co-operate with the Soviet commanders in the event of a resumption of Russo-Polish relations. Had a Polish-Soviet agreement such as the Polish Government had declared their willingness to conclude preceded the entry of the Soviet forces into Poland it would have been possible for the underground army to co-ordinate its action with that of the Russian armies. The Polish Government still thought such an arrangement highly desirable.

In practice it was hard to see how such an arrangement could be reached without a broad general agreement between the two countries. This was one of the reasons why the statement had an unfavourable reception from the British Press, including newspapers by no means hostile to the Poles, on the ground that it seemed to admit of no possible modification of the Polish-Russian frontier as it stood at the outbreak of war. On the night of January 7 M. Mikolajczyk, the Polish Prime Minister, broadcast to the people of Poland urging them to await developments calmly. He followed the statement by strongly upholding Polish rights and interests, but he was silent as the statement had been on the question of specific frontiers. He began by saying :

"We should have preferred to meet the Soviet troops not simply as allies of our allies, fighting against the same common foe, but as our own allies as well." He went on to repeat the instructions to the underground movement to strike still harder at the Germans and to avoid any friction with the Soviet troops and to co-operate with them when any arrangement had been reached by the two Governments ¹

On January 10 the Soviet Government broadcast a statement alleging that the Polish statement of January 5 contained many inexact assertions, including one about the Polish-Soviet frontier. After the usual gibe at the "emigré" Polish Government, the statement said :

"As is known, the Soviet constitution established the Soviet-Polish border in accordance with the will of the population of western Ukraine

¹ For M. Mikolajczyk's statement concerning the appointment of a deputy Prime Minister in Poland, *see* Chapter VIII, section 2.

and western White Russia, expressed in a plebiscite which was carried out on a wide democratic basis in 1939. The territories of western Ukraine, in which Ukrainians constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, were incorporated in Soviet Ukraine and the territories of western White Russia, in which White Russians constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, were incorporated in Soviet White Russia.¹ The statement went on to attack the settlement imposed by the Treaty of Riga in 1921, whereby great numbers of Ukrainians and White Russians passed under Polish rule.

The Soviet Government, the statement continued, had repeatedly expressed their desire for the establishment of a strong and independent Poland and for friendship between Poland and the Soviet Union. They sought to establish this friendship on a basis of good relations and, if the Polish people desired, of an alliance of mutual assistance against the Germans. They suggested that this could be furthered were Poland to join the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact of friendship, mutual assistance, and post-war collaboration.

These passages were, to adopt a musical metaphor, the guiding theme of all Russian declarations concerning Russo-Polish relations, and they undoubtedly represented an important section of party opinion in Russia, probably all of it that mattered.¹ The next portion of the statement was interesting if, in some respects, ominous. After pointing out that the Union of Polish Patriots in the U.S.S.R. and the Polish Army Corps formed by them were already fighting at the front, and thus opening up the possibility of the regeneration of Poland as a strong and independent State, it continued thus :

"But Poland must be reborn, not by means of the seizure of Ukrainian and White Russian lands, but through the restoration to Poland of lands that belonged to her from time immemorial and which were wrested from her by the Germans." Only thus could trust and friendship be established between the Polish people and the Ukrainians, White Russians and Russians.

"Poland's eastern frontiers can be established by agreement with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government does not regard the 1939 frontiers as immutable. These frontiers can be modified in Poland's favour so that areas in which the Polish population forms the majority can be turned over to Poland.

In this case the Soviet-Polish frontier could pass approximately along the so-called Curzon Line, which was adopted in 1919 by the Supreme

¹ It is difficult to speak of "public" opinion in any one-party state governed by authoritarian, indeed totalitarian, methods, and not admitting any legal opposition. Such opinion would have great difficulties in expressing itself in peace-time, still more in time of war. But it is at least probable that such non-Communist Russians as knew anything about the Russo-Polish dispute would have agreed with their Government, although they might not have expressed themselves so sharply about the Polish Government.

Council of Allied Powers and which provides for the inclusion of western Ukraine and western White Russia in the Soviet Union.

Poland's western borders must be extended through the incorporation in Poland of ancient Polish land previously wrested by Germany and without which it is impossible to unite the whole Polish people in its State, which thereby will receive the necessary outlet to the Baltic Sea. The just aspirations of the Polish people for their reunion in a strong and independent State must receive recognition and support."

The statement concluded with an attack on the "émigré Polish Government" isolated from its people and proved incapable of establishing friendly relations with the Soviet Union or "of organizing an active struggle against the German invaders in Poland itself"; and with an affirmation of the Russian Government's belief that the establishment of solid and friendly relations between the two countries and peoples in the struggle against the common enemy was in the common interest of the two nations.

In effect the statement seemed to offer the Poles an eastern frontier a little better than the Curzon Line and the prospect of obtaining East Prussia and a part of Silesia if their Government in London either gave place to a more pro-Russian combination or resigned altogether in favour of a Polish Government formed in Moscow and composed of members of the Union of Polish Patriots.

The following reply to the Russian statement was published by the Polish Government on January 15 :

1. The Polish Government have taken cognizance of the declaration of the Soviet Government contained in the Tass *communiqué* of January 11, 1944, which was issued as a reply to the declaration of the Polish Government of January 5.

2. The Soviet *communiqué* contains a number of statements to which a complete answer is afforded by the ceaseless struggle against the Germans waged at the heaviest cost by the Polish nation under the direction of the Polish Government. In their earnest anxiety to safeguard the complete solidarity of the United Nations, especially at a decisive stage of their struggle against the common enemy, the Polish Government consider it to be preferable now to refrain from further public discussions.

3. While the Polish Government cannot recognize unilateral decisions or accomplished facts which have taken place or might take place on the territory of the Polish Republic, they have repeatedly expressed their sincere desire for a Polish-Soviet agreement on terms which would be just and acceptable to both sides.

4. To this end the Polish Government are approaching the British and United States Governments with a view to securing through their intermediary the discussion by the Polish and Soviet Governments, with the participation of the British and American Governments, of all outstanding questions, the settlement of which should lead to friendly and permanent co-operation between Poland and the Soviet Union. The Polish Government believe this to be desirable in the interest of the victory of the United Nations and harmonious relations in post-war Europe.

The statement was favourably received by most British newspapers but it did not satisfy the U.S.S.R. On

January 17 Moscow radio broadcast the following reply which was described by *The Times* (loc. cit. January 18) as "brief and not particularly cogent".

In reply to the declaration made by the Polish Government in London on January 15, Tass¹ is authorized to state :

1. In the Polish declaration the question of the recognition of the Curzon Line as the Soviet-Polish frontier is entirely evaded and ignored, which can only be interpreted as a rejection of the Curzon-Line.

2. As regards the Polish Government's proposal for the opening of official negotiations between it and the Soviet Government, the Soviet Government is of opinion that this proposal aims at misleading public opinion, for it is easy to understand that the Soviet Government is not in a position to enter into official negotiations with a Government with which diplomatic relations have been broken. Soviet circles wish that it should be borne in mind that diplomatic relations with the Polish Government were broken off through the fault of that Government because of its active participation in the hostile, anti-Soviet, slanderous campaign of the German invaders in connexion with the alleged murders in Katyn.

3. In the opinion of Soviet circles the above mentioned circumstances once again demonstrate that the present Polish Government does not desire to establish good-neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union.

The Russian reply was received with disappointment and regret by the British Government, and not least by Mr. Eden, who had passed on the Polish declaration of January 15 to the Soviet Ambassador before its publication in the hope that it would prepare the way to negotiation. "His hope," wrote the Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times* (January 18),

"was mainly based upon his understanding that the Polish Government were prepared to negotiate with the Russians on the basis of the Curzon Line. Certainly that was how most people read the Poles' suggestion for discussion of all outstanding questions. . . . It is true that . . . the Polish Government had declared that they could not recognize unilateral decisions or accomplished facts with regard to territory; but this was generally taken to be a form of acknowledging the Soviet Government's own repudiation of the boundary reached in 1939, west of the Curzon Line, leaving the way open (it was understood) for agreement on the Curzon Line itself.

On the same day the Russian newspaper *Pravda* published a short message from its correspondent at Cairo, who cited "reliable Greek and Yugoslav sources" to the effect that a secret meeting had recently been held at a coast town near the Pyrenees between "two leading English personalities and Ribbentrop." The Cairo

¹ The Russian official telegraphic agency.

correspondent's message, which was dated January 12, stated that :

according to his information the aim of the meeting was a separate peace with Germany, and that it was not without result. The message, as was natural, caused a sensation in Russian and Allied diplomatic circles in Moscow. It aroused something like excitement in the United States where the New York newspapers for their early editions "had nothing better than a vague denial of the story from an unnamed British spokesman in London." Later came the British official denial which was as complete as could have been desired, and this denial was published by *Pravda* and other Russian newspapers on January 19.

The motive of this mischievous and mendacious publication was not and is not yet understood. It may be that the Russian newspaper wished to indicate Russian annoyance with the expected British and American offers of mediation between Russia and Poland, but if so, there were other ways of doing this. It need only be added that enquiry in Egypt showed that no such message was submitted to the telegraphic censorship in Cairo on January 12 and that no correspondent of *Pravda* was discovered in that country.

Meanwhile, a Russian official commission had been investigating the circumstances of the shooting of Polish officer prisoners at Katyn (*q.v.* *The Fifteenth Quarter*, Chapter II, pp. 54-8). It completed its work in mid-January.

The commission consisted of the following persons :

Professor Burdenko (chief surgeon of the Red Army), chairman ; Alexei Tolstoy ; Metropolitan Nikolay of Kiev ; Lieut.-General Gundorov ; Kolesnikov (chairman of the executive of the union of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies) ; Potemkin (People's Commissar for Education) ; General Smirnov (chief of the medical services of the Red Army), and Melnikov (chairman of the Smolensk regional Executive Committee). The Commission was formed "by decision of the Extraordinary State Commission for the investigation of the crimes of the German Fascist invaders."

The Commission's report was published on January 26. It reached the conclusion that the Polish prisoners of war, over 11,000 in number, were killed by the Germans.

The commission took evidence from witnesses living and working near the forest where the bodies were buried and the medical testimony of doctors who made post-mortem examinations of the exhumed corpses. Their evidence and the condition of the bodies, their clothing and equipment, were stated to have established that these prisoners of war, who had been captured by the Russians in 1939 and left behind when the Red Army retreated, were executed by the German occupation authorities in the autumn of 1941 and buried in the spring of 1942 at latest.

Among the mass of bodies were bodies of civilians. Some but not all the bodies had been searched. They were shot in order (1) to wipe out the enemies of the Reich, (2) to place the blame on the Soviet Union, and (3) to swell German statistics of enemy losses.

The executions were carried out, the Commission found, by a German organization which concealed its identity under the name of Headquarters of the 537th Construction Battalion. It was headed by Lieutenant-Colonel (*Oberstleutnant*) Ernest and his aides Lieutenants Recht and Hott. "In connexion with the deterioration of the German military and political situation at the beginning of 1943, the German occupation authorities . . . carried out a series of measures aimed at attributing their own crimes to the Soviet authorities with the object of sowing discord between Russians and Poles." To that end they used bribery, pressure, threats and tortures to extort false evidence from the Soviet citizens of the region that the Polish prisoners had been shot by the Soviet authorities in 1940. They also brought bodies from other places where they had shot Poles and placed them in these graves. They made use of 500 Russian prisoners of war to uncover the Katyn graves and remove documents and incriminating evidence. This done, they killed them all.

The report did not explain two puzzling features in this tragedy. One was the cessation of all communications from the prisoners in these camps to their relatives in Poland after May, 1940. Here it should be noted that Polish officers present at the funeral service held over the graves of the Poles at Katyn said that they were in camp No. 2-ON in the Smolensk region with many of the victims until the summer of 1940, and in February 1941 letters were being exchanged between camp No. 2-ON and other camps.¹ If this statement is correct it can only be supposed that the Russian authorities had not dispatched the letters written by these prisoners or that the Germans had impounded them, which is more probable, since the Führer had already decided to go to war with Russia. The other was that the Russian military authorities in the Smolensk area seemingly took no steps to prevent the prisoners falling into the hands of their enemies although they should have known that British-sponsored negotiations between the U.S.S.R. and Poland were already afoot and that Poland was likely to become an ally.²

On February 1 M. Molotov, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, introduced a proposal to give the constituent republics of the Soviet Union a higher measure of autonomy at a joint sitting of the Supreme Soviet of the

¹ Cf. a message from the Special Correspondent of *The Times* in Moscow published on February 1.

² Mr. Churchill referred to these negotiations on July 15, 1941. The Germans actually entered Smolensk on July 16.

U.S.S.R. He proposed that each of the sixteen republics which had taken part until then in the task of creating, organizing and arming the common Red Army which was "an all-Union Army," should each have its own armed force which must become a constituent part of the Red Army. He also made an even more important proposal regarding the foreign representation of the republics. Of this he said :

"It is also proposed to give full powers to the Soviet republics to enter into relations with foreign States and to make treaties with them. This makes it necessary to set up foreign commissariats of the Soviet Republics, and in addition a foreign commissariat of the Union of the Republics."

These proposals were unanimously accepted almost as soon as they had been introduced. The text of the constitutional changes reached London on February 4. They gave a clear enough picture of the results of the new military law. In the words of the Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times* (*loc. cit.* February 5),

A republic will raise its own regiments, which will remain under the general command and control of the central authority. These new regiments will increase national pride within the republics, and are sanctioned because the people's loyalty to the Union is proved and unquestioned.

The law dealing with the external relations of the republics extended subsection (a) of Article 14 of the Constitutional Law of 1936 to give the central authority full jurisdiction in :

"The representation of the Union in international relations, the conclusion and ratification of treaties with other States and the establishment of the general character of relations between the Union republics and other States."

A new Article, 18(a), was introduced into the Constitution. It reads : "Each Union republic has the right to enter into direct relations with foreign States, conclude agreements with them, and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives with them."

Commenting on these changes, the Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times* wrote (*loc. cit.* February 5) :

"The exact implication of this law is less easy to discover than the implication of the military law. The new activities appear to be permissive ; there is no suggestion that all republics should aspire to relations with the Allies. M. Molotov in his speech simply referred to "quite a few economic and cultural requirements which cannot be fully covered by All-Union representation abroad." All problems of high policy will obviously be reserved to the central authority. But there are other spheres—for example, Unrra or the Allied Commission on War Crimes—on which the republics which have suffered most from the war may desire to be separately

represented. . . . Republics may also now desire to exchange representatives with their nearest neighbours and with countries in which they have economic interests."

Theories concerning the intentions of the Russian Federal Government in making these concessions to the constituent republics were numerous and wild, e.g. the alarmist notion that the all-Union representatives of the U.S.S.R. at any international conference would appear escorted by 16 delegates of the republics each demanding the same powers so that the Soviet representatives would exercise a preponderant influence in any such meeting. In Polish circles there was some anxiety when it was known that M. Korneichuk, till recently Deputy Foreign Commissar of the Union, the husband of Mme Wanda Wassiliewska of the Union of Polish Patriots (*q.v.* *The Fifteenth Quarter*, pp. 58-9) had been appointed Commissar of the Foreign Commissariat of the Ukraine.¹ Meanwhile, the American offer of mediation had been declined by the Russian Government.² On February 12 *Pravda*, which did not always live up to its name,³ delivered another violent attack on the Polish Government in London who, it falsely said, had no insurgent organization in Poland, but merely an organization of spies in German service who stabbed honest sons of the White Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish peoples in the back! The British Government withdrew facilities for the publication of the Polish newspaper *Wiadomosci Polskie* (*Polish News*) for the publication of articles calculated to stir up discord among the United Nations.

Another stage in the dispute was marked by Mr. Churchill's reference to it in his review of the war on February 22. After telling the House of Commons that none of the ground made good at Moscow and Teheran

¹ It was reported in March that several prominent Ukrainians had urged Marshal Stalin against accepting the Curzon Line as the frontier between Russia and Poland on the ground that it left several important Ukrainian communities on the Polish side of the frontier.

² The Soviet Government's reply thanking the United States for its offer, but expressing their view that conditions had not reached a stage when advantage could be taken of it, reached Washington on January 25. Its substance was communicated to the Press. It was couched in courteous terms.

³ *Pravda* = Truth.

had been lost, he quoted Marshal Stalin's expression of his desire for

"the creation and maintenance of a strong, integral, independent Poland as one of the leading Powers in Europe." Britain, he said, had never guaranteed any particular frontier line in Poland; she had not approved of the Polish occupation of Vilna in 1920 and the British view in 1919 was expressed in the Curzon Line. "I have always held the opinion that all questions of territorial settlement and readjustment should stand over until the end of the war," said the Prime Minister, but the advance of the Russians into regions where the Polish underground army was active made it indispensable to arrive at some kind of friendly working agreement to govern war-time conditions. The Russian armies might soon liberate Poland, and the Russian demand for reassurance about the western frontiers of the U.S.S.R. did not seem to go beyond the limits of what was reasonable or just.

As regards the future frontiers of Germany he made an important statement. "Unconditional surrender" did not mean that the Germans would be enslaved or destroyed, but it meant that the Allies would not be bound to them by any pact or obligation at the moment of surrender. There would be no question of the Atlantic Charter applying to Germany as a matter of right and barring territorial transferences or adjustments in enemy countries. "Unconditional surrender means that the victors have a free hand. . . . If we are bound, we are bound by our own consciences to civilization. We are not to be bound to the Germans as the result of a bargain struck."

The reference was clearly to the Russian suggestion that former Polish territories seized by Germany during the successive partitions of Poland and not restored after the last war should revert to Poland. The view that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to Germany found some British critics, some of whom believed that Germany must be given an easy peace and could best be disarmed by kindness, while others knowing how far the Germanization of East Prussia and Eastern Silesia had gone wondered whether these regions would be of much use to Poland.¹ It was also criticized by the often officially inspired *Dziennik Polski* which said, *inter alia*, that the Polish Government had refused the Curzon Line as the future Polish-Soviet frontier and would hold fast to that attitude.

This statement and a speech delivered on February 25 by the Polish Commander-in-Chief, General Sosnkowski, at a Polish Air Force station in Britain, were noted by Moscow. The General said that the Government had instructed the leaders of the underground movement to approach the Red Army Commanders entering Poland with proposals for an understanding on the subject of co-operation in the war with Germany,

"thus giving proofs of our good will and asserting the Polish Republic's unquestionable rights to its territory. The outcome of this initiative depends on whether the Soviet Government will respect the legal status of the Polish civilian and military authorities, who have now revealed themselves in underground Poland."

¹ Unless, indeed, the Poles expelled the German population.

The Polish Government, however, made fresh proposals, viz.: that the final settlement of the boundary should be held over until after the war, but that the Curzon Line should be accepted by each side as a temporary demarcation line between the Russian and the Polish administrations, but that Vilna and Lwow (Lemberg) should be included in the Polish-administered sphere. These proposals, drawn up after consultation with the British Government, were transmitted to Marshal Stalin by the British Ambassador early in March. The Russian comments on the proposals reached the British Government on March 7 and were communicated to M. Romer, the Polish Foreign Minister.

Summing up the Russian communication the Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times* wrote (*loc. cit.* March 8): "Moscow regards the proposals as inadequate and declares once again that an understanding can only be reached if the Polish Government make changes in their membership and accept the Curzon Line as Poland's eastern frontier. When asking for changes the Moscow Government suggest that the Ministers and the high officer whom they declare to be anti-Soviet should be dropped and that new members should be brought into the Government from the Poles in Great Britain and in America."

The Soviet Government had not been able to accept these proposals because, in their view, they postponed every real decision and offered none of the immediate guarantees which they sought as a preliminary to a settlement. Even the good effect of the Polish Government's instructions to their underground army to co-operate with the Russians against the Germans "is regarded on the Soviet side as having been offset by the public comments subsequently made upon the instructions by General Sosnkowski" (which have already been quoted).

"On the British side there is the greatest regret that the two months of strenuous British endeavour and mediation have not yet produced results. The efforts will be continued in the desire to see a strong and independent Poland established after frontier changes have been made along the lines suggested in Mr. Churchill's speech of February 22 . . . approximately the Curzon Line in the east, with compensatory gains for Poland in the north and . . . west . . ."

On March 16 a *Reuter* message from Moscow stated that the Ukrainian Government had increased their claim to territories lying west of the Curzon Line. Late in March *Swit*, the Polish secret radio, announced that the commanders of the underground army had been ordered by their Directorate to establish contact with the Russian Army, although the Soviet Union had not made its attitude clear towards this move, and that according to Moscow Radio the commander of the Polish underground

forces in the Rovno area had made contact with the General commanding the Russian forces there.

Public opinion in the English-speaking countries was divided on the Russo-Polish issue. There were many out-and-out supporters of the Russian case, but inquiries in this country suggested the impression that the Poles also had many sympathisers. They had not been too happy in their presentation of their case; speeches such as General Sosnkowski's did it harm, and the violence of part of their Press furnished the Russians with abundant ammunition. At the same time many cool observers, both in this country and in the United States, felt that the issue of Polish independence was more important than the territorial dispute, and that the Russian attempt—or what seemed to be an attempt—to substitute a Government selected from the Union of Polish Patriots in Moscow for the Polish Government in London, was a threat to that independence. The excesses of *Pravda* incurred severe and widespread criticism.

In the United States the approach of the Presidential Election complicated matters. Attempts to angle for Polish, Lithuanian and other votes by the Republicans were referred to by Mr. Wendell Willkie in an article for the *New York Times* which produced a violent retort by *Pravda*. Of this the correspondent of *The Times* at Washington observed (*loc. cit.* January 7) :

“Where Mr. Willkie laid himself open to the Russian retort was in his statement that the future of certain small States was one of the most delicate problems confronting ‘our’ statesmanship. This may be in one sense true, but if it is taken, as it was taken, to imply that the Polish and Baltic settlements are matters which press upon the American and the Russian Governments with equal and immediate intimacy, neither the State Department nor the average citizen is likely to agree. There are politicians who will insist that this is so for their own purposes in election year; it may be so some time in the future when American policy comes to the test of mass public approval; but neither the Poles who wish to drag the United States into the discussion now, nor the Russians who insist that such problems can never be the affair of the United States, are talking sense.”

It was therefore difficult to form an opinion as to the real force of the abundant criticisms of Russian, and the less frequent but numerous criticisms of Polish policy which were published in the United States. The

anxieties of those who had taken the Atlantic Charter seriously, and had been favourably impressed by the Joint Declaration adopted at the Moscow Conference, were well expressed by Professor de Madariaga in a letter published in *The Times*, on February 17, part of which ran :

"Point 4 of the Joint Declaration adopted at the Moscow Conference by the three Powers reads : 'That they recognize the necessity of establishing . . . a general international organization based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States.' Now we hear that the Soviet Union will not accept collaboration with the Polish Government unless this Government excludes from its ranks one or two persons regarded as hostile by Moscow ; while your Buenos Aires correspondent, commenting on the recent changes in the Bolivian Government, writes : 'Although the resigning Ministers and their successors all belong to the same party . . . the change is important because Señor Montenegro and Señor Cespedes . . . are regarded as personally hostile to the United States, and especially to American financial power.' What is then meant by sovereign equality of peace-loving States ? . . . that 'peace-loving' is going to be interpreted as 'loving Communism' in the East and 'loving American capitalism' in the West ? This question is anxiously put, not forgetting—indeed . . . remembering—the heroic share which thousands of Russians and Americans are taking in the shaping of the world to come."

A pertinent question, indeed.

2 : GERMANY AND THE SATELLITES

Whatever anxieties the Western Allies may have felt regarding the future they could not be compared to those which the German Government suffered through their doubts as to the immediate policy of their allies. The collapse of Italy had left the German political and military leaders most uncertain of the fidelity of these client nations. The Slovaks were too weak to matter much, but their Russian sympathies and those of many of the far more important Bulgarians aroused the strongest German suspicions. The Finns, the most independent of the clients, were obviously sick of the war and had fought little for two years. The Rumanians were "bled white." The Hungarians were obviously casting about them to discover some means of escaping from the war with a portion of their territorial booty. As for the quisling governments of Norway, Croatia, and Vichy France, the Germans must have known that none of them

would survive the departure of the German armies of occupation. Only the extreme weakness of the little Baltic countries and their recollections of the cruel treatment to which they had been subjected during the Russian occupation of 1939-41 prevented them from breaking away from their tyrannical "liberators." As for Northern Italy, against every "Fascist Republican" who volunteered for service with the Germans must be set scores of sullenly hostile ex-soldiers, workmen and peasants, whose readiness to take the risks involved in sabotage and even in partisan warfare increased almost daily.

One attempt was made by a satellite Government during the quarter to conclude a separate peace—or, better, to discover on what terms they could conclude such a peace. This was the Government of Finland. The country was weary of the war and there was an increasing realization that the Government must take some steps to avoid disaster, for belief in a German victory had disappeared. Unfortunately the Linkomies Government were compromised by their close association with Germany, and the public remembered that the Foreign Minister, Dr. Ramsay, had visited Ribbentrop before refusing the offer of the good offices of the United States. The leader of the Social Democrats, M. Vaino Tanner, was known to favour a wait-and-see policy, and the Russians regarded him as the chief obstacle to a Russo-Finnish settlement. The Russian attack on the German positions in the Leningrad region brought the dangers of the situation home to the Finns. The Russians followed up their successes with threatening language towards Finland and with several destructive bombing raids, but on February 8 the Finns received a warning which impressed them still more. On that day Mr. Cordell Hull, replying to a question at his Press Conference, confirmed reports from Stockholm that there had been an exchange of communications between the U.S.A. and Finland.

The American Government, he said, had recently sent a communication to the Finnish Government to the effect that the responsibility for the consequences of collaboration with Germany must be borne solely by the

Finnish Government. That Government must also bear the sole responsibility for the continuance of Finland in a state of war with Great Britain and Soviet Russia, the allies of the United States.

Mr. Hull's warning was published without comment by the Finnish Press. It aroused interest and anxiety, and in Sweden, where Finnish affairs were closely studied and the Finnish point of view was understood, it was believed that the Government would actively explore the possibilities of peace. The Finnish Press with few exceptions urged them to take positive steps in this direction instead of waiting passively on events. On February 12 M. Paaskivi, the former Foreign Minister who had helped to negotiate peace with Russia in 1940, arrived at Stockholm, where he got into touch with Mme. Kollontay, the Soviet Minister. During his stay there it transpired that the Finnish Government had made an abortive attempt to establish contact with Moscow during the autumn of 1943.

"It met with no response for the simple reason that it opened by repeating the accusation that Russia was the aggressor in 1941¹ and because it suggested that Finland's 1939 frontiers should be a suitable basis for negotiations." Many believed that this clumsy approach was due to the influence of persons who did not wish to open negotiations, but sought to produce evidence that the Russians were not responsive (*The Times*, Stockholm message published on February 14).

On February 23 M. Paaskivi, whose visit to Stockholm had given rise to a spate of rumours, returned to Helsinki. He brought with him the Russian Government's armistice terms. On the issue of peace or continued war Ministers preserved a scrupulous silence with the exception of M. Tanner, who gave the special correspondent of *Stockholms-Tidningen* a statement which in the words of the correspondent of *The Times* at Stockholm

"elaborated the wait-and-see policy of which he is considered to be the foremost exponent." Its tenour can be judged from the following extracts :

¹ While there was no question but that Russia was the aggressor in 1939, the Finnish allegation that the Russians had opened hostilities in 1941 by air raids against objectives in Finland before declaration of war was very much of a suppression of the truth. German troops had been entering Finnish territory for weeks before June 22, 1941, and several aerodromes were occupied by the *Luftwaffe* in May. In the circumstances it was absurd to accuse the Russians whom the Germans had just attacked of aggression because they had raided Finnish ports after German aircraft had bombed Kronstadt from Finnish bases (cf. *The Seventh Quarter*, pp. 167-68).

"Weighing the advantages and disadvantages of a settlement now one finds that demobilization is unthinkable, in any case as long as the great war continues, because of the uncertainty of the settlement reached. . . . Furthermore, a settlement would mean the abandonment of the present strategic positions which are favourable. The advantage of peace or an armistice now is limited to one point : if Russia wins the war, the conditions of peace later may become harder."

This statement seems to have aroused criticism, for next day M. Tanner was quoted by the Finnish radio as saying in a statement to the Press :

"Finland is disposed to withdraw from the war if she obtains acceptable conditions." He protested against the current idea that he was opposed to the conclusion of peace, and he added : "If anyone wants peace, I am that man. But Finland cannot accept any sort of conditions. If the peace terms are unacceptable then we shall fight on with clenched teeth and await what the future holds in store. If the terms are acceptable we shall accept them immediately."

It was unfortunate that the Russians should have emphasized their wish that the Finns should make up their minds whether to negotiate or not by sending a force of over 600 aircraft to bomb Helsinki, which they did from midnight on February 26 until 6 a.m. next morning. Not many lives were lost, but great material damage was done and the University was severely damaged by fire. Twelve Russian machines were shot down. The general outline of the Russian terms was already known. They were less drastic than had been feared, and the Finnish censorship had permitted the publication of the version which had been made public in Stockholm. The raid, however, was calculated to make the Finns, a brave, hot-tempered, and stubborn people, either more obstinate and angry or else disposed to doubt the sincerity of the Russian terms. These were speedily published by the Russian Government, who broadcast a statement containing them from Moscow on the night of February 29. The statement said :

"Various rumours and speculations have been disseminated in the foreign Press recently regarding negotiations alleged to have been conducted between the Soviet Government and Finland concerning the termination by Finland of hostilities against the Soviet Union and the withdrawal of Finland from the war. In actual fact, official negotiations between the Soviet Union and Finland have not yet begun, but preparations for such negotiations have been initiated.

In the middle of February a prominent Swedish industrialist informed the Soviet Ambassador in Stockholm, Mme Kollontay, that the representa-

tive of the Finnish Government, M. Paaskivi, had arrived in Stockholm and was entrusted with the elucidation of the conditions of Finland's withdrawal from the war. Mme. Kollontay was asked whether the Soviet Government would be willing to negotiate with the present Finnish Government, and whether she was ready to meet M. Paaskivi as a representative of that Government.

On behalf of the Soviet Government Mme. Kollontay stated that they had no reason to have special trust in the present Finnish Government, but if the Finns saw no other way the Soviet Government, in the interests of peace, were ready to negotiate with that Government concerning the cessation of hostilities.

During the unofficial meeting which, at the request of M. Paaskivi, took place on February 16, M. Paaskivi told Mme. Kollontay that he was empowered by the Finns to find out the Soviet Government's conditions regarding the cessation of hostilities by Finland and Finland's withdrawal from the war.

During the next meeting Mme. Kollontay handed to M. Paaskivi the Soviet Government's reply, which contains the following armistice terms :

1. The rupture of relations with Germany and the internment of German troops and warships in Finland, with the understanding that, if Finland considers this latter task beyond her power, the Soviet Union is ready to offer her the necessary assistance with its troops and air force.

2. The re-establishment of the Soviet-Finnish Treaty of 1940, and the withdrawal of the Finnish troops to the 1940 frontier.

3. The immediate repatriation of Soviet and Allied prisoners of war, as well as of Soviet and Allied civilians who are being kept in concentration camps and are being used by the Finns for labour.

4. The question of the partial or complete demobilization of the Finnish army to be left for negotiation in Moscow.

5. The question of reparations for the damage caused to the Soviet Union by military operations and by the occupation of Soviet territory to be left for negotiation in Moscow.

6. The question of the Petsamo area to be left for negotiation in Moscow.

M. Paaskivi was told that if the Finnish Government were willing to accept these terms immediately, the Soviet Government would be ready to receive in Moscow Finnish delegates to negotiate the actual agreement.

The rumours spread by some organs of the foreign Press to the effect that the Soviet Government had demanded Finland's unconditional surrender and her consent to the occupation by Soviet troops of Helsinki and other large Finnish towns are without foundation.

These terms, which, though severe, were less severe than had been expected in some quarters, had been made known to the British and U.S. Governments—although the last-named Government were not at war with the Finns. The chief difficulty for the Finns appeared to Allied observers to be the strength of the German army in northern Finland where Marshal Dietl was credited with a strength of about 80,000 men and the Germans were in complete occupation of Arctic Finland. Still, since the Finns had made it clear that they did not wish

to change sides as the Badoglio Government had done in Italy, but to become neutral, the Russian demand that they should behave as neutrals and intern the Germans was quite logical. For some days after the Russian armistice conditions had been received the Finnish Government continued to discuss them. On March 6, however, a reply reached Moscow, which, it was believed, contained a request for more precise information on some points. The Finnish Press, while attacking various Russian conditions, was agreed in emphasizing the importance of maintaining contact with Moscow. The Russians, while showing that they would furnish certain explanations, made it clear that they did not propose to modify or revise their terms.

Meanwhile two sure friends of Finland had counselled her Government to withdraw from the war. In the U.S.A., after Mr. Cordell Hull had issued a short statement at his Press conference on March 14 that the American Government and people earnestly hoped that the Russo-Finnish conversations would result in Finland's withdrawal from her association with the Reich, Mr. Roosevelt, on March 16, made a public statement to the same effect. He said :

"It has always seemed odd to me and to the people of the United States to find Finland a partner of Nazi Germany, fighting side by side with the sworn enemies of our civilization. The Finnish people now have a chance to withdraw from that hateful partnership. The longer they stay on Germany's side the more sorrow and suffering is bound to come to them. . . ."

Before President Roosevelt had spoken, the Finnish Minister in Stockholm had seen the Swedish Foreign Minister, Hr. Guenther, who told him that King Gustav had expressly endorsed his Government's view that Finland should preserve the contact established with Moscow. Dr. Ramsay, the Finnish Foreign Minister, received this information on March 6 from the Minister, Baron Gripenberg, who told him that he had been asked to transmit the King's view to President Ryti and Field-Marshal Mannerheim as well as to the Finnish Government. His dispatch added that the message was only for these authorities and was strictly confidential.

On March 14 the Finnish Parliament met and Professor Linkomies, the Prime Minister, gave the Government's view of the Russian reply to the Finnish Government's request for a more precise definition of the original terms. Next day the House met, and after an hour's debate in secret session it gave the Cabinet what amounted to a unanimous vote of confidence. This was tantamount to an approval of the Government's view that the Russian armistice terms were unacceptable as a basis for negotiation. At the same time Parliament and the public were incompletely informed of the situation by the Government at the time of the vote. It was not until March 19 that the Finnish newspapers were permitted to say that the Russian Government had given some explanations and amplifications of their terms. While part of the Press took the Government view that these amplifications had not been officially communicated by the U.S.S.R. and could not, therefore, be given official attention, *Helsingin Sanomat*, the organ of the former Foreign Minister, Hr. Erkkö, took the opposite view in an outspoken leading article. It said that

Parliament had not been told that Moscow had made no demand for the withdrawal of the Finnish Army to the 1940 frontier before direct negotiations were started, but only demanded the acceptance in principle of this withdrawal, to be carried out when agreement had been reached. It also informed the public that the Russians had suggested that if the internment of the German forces in Finland proved impossible they might accept their "isolation."

Nor was this all. On March 18 the Government revealed that they had withheld "not only from Parliament, but from the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee" King Gustav's endorsement of his Government's advice to the Finns. Excusing their silence on the plea that the King of Sweden's message was confidential, the Government had told that committee only that the views expressed in the dispatch from Baron Gripenberg came from "authoritative Swedish quarters." Even during the Parliamentary secret session of March 15 Professor Linkomies confined himself to the bald statement that these views were expressed "in a message from Sweden," without even hinting at its origin.

The Russian Government had set March 18 as the latest date for the Finnish reply. On March 21 the following statement was broadcast from Moscow :

On March 1 the Information Bureau of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. published the Soviet terms of an armistice presented by the Soviet Government to Finland. On March 8 the Soviet mission in

Stockholm received the reply of the Finnish Government. It followed from this reply that the Finnish Government finds it difficult to accept the Soviet terms for an armistice without preliminary discussion. On March 10 the Soviet Government informed the Finnish Government that the Soviet Government considered the Finnish reply unsatisfactory.

At the same time, the Soviet Government called the attention of the Finnish Government to the fact that the Soviet terms for an armistice in the form of six points presented to M. Paaskivi represent the minimum, and are basic, and Soviet-Finnish negotiations for the termination of hostilities are possible only in the event of acceptance of these terms by the Finnish Government. The Soviet Government also declared that they would wait for the reply of the Finnish Government until March 18.

On March 17 the Finnish Government gave a negative reply to the Soviet declaration, and thereby assumed full responsibility for the consequences.—*Reuter*.

The Finnish Government issued an account of the diplomatic exchanges with Moscow on the subject of an armistice and of the attitude of Parliament on the matter on March 21. It added little to what was known already. The crucial passage in their statement gave the contents of their reply to Moscow. In this they had pointed out the necessity for Parliament to have more precise information concerning the formal interpretation of the Russian terms and their material purport. They added :

"In their reply the Finnish Government express their regret that the Soviet Government have not considered it possible to offer Finland an opportunity to present its point of view on these special questions and has declared that negotiations are possible only after the Finnish Government have accepted the terms which Russia has stipulated." The Note added that the Government while desiring to restore peaceful relations had not considered themselves able, in advance, "to accept these terms, which deeply affect the nation's whole existence, without having even obtained certainty as to their interpretation and purport."

In spite of the failure of the conversations, which was much regretted in Great Britain and the U.S.A., there was evidence towards the end of March that some slender contact was still maintained. Mr. Cordell Hull, on March 25, said that he could not say that negotiations had been ended. Next day the Swedish Prime Minister, Hr. Hansson, said that Finland still

"maintained her view regarding her special position in this war and her consequent freedom of action. Her wish to regain peace with her national freedom and independence preserved everybody would find natural; how Finland was to realize this desire she must herself determine." Indeed the Finnish claim that Finland was, so to speak, only accidentally associated with Germany in the war, and was fighting her own battle to recover the

territories of which she had been robbed, was the basis of Finnish propaganda in neutral countries. The Finns insisted that their democratic institutions had not been weakened by association with Germany, that Parliament preserved its independence and that the country "could go out of the war when it pleased," provided that "fair conditions" were offered by the U.S.S.R. This was true enough in theory, but, in fact, the German stranglehold on the country and the permeation of its military forces by pro-German elements made it absurd to talk of "freedom of choice."

The Germans were clearly doubtful whether the break was as complete as they wished. Their biggest gun in "the war of nerves" came into action on March 18 when the Führer himself gave a telephonic interview to Hr. Jaederlund, Berlin correspondent of *Stockholms Tidningen*, and said, among other things :

"The obvious purpose of the Russian armistice terms is to get Finland into such a position that the Finnish people would have no chance to resist any longer. Thus Moscow wants to create chances to carry out what Molotov demanded when he visited Berlin. The intention is simply to place the noose round the victim's neck and to tighten it properly when the time comes." The ultimate aim of Bolshevism was "extermination of the non-Russian-Bolshevist peoples of Europe." As for British and American guarantees of Finnish independence this notion was Utopian. "Neither Britain nor the United States would be in a position to give a victorious Soviet Russia the slightest directives as regards any limitation of objectives, assuming that they were inclined to do so." In reality neither had any honest desire to exercise any such influence. Germany had her experience of American guarantees after the last war. "The value of British guarantees is strikingly illustrated by the Polish business." The question was not whether the English-speaking Powers could give directives to Bolshevism but how long they could "stave off Bolshevik revolutions in their own countries."

One consequence of the Finnish conversations was to set elements in other satellite countries thinking, and in the opinion of the Germans these were eminently dangerous thoughts. The Germans followed internal affairs in Hungary closely ; they knew that early in February the news that Hungarian units had suffered heavily in recent Russian offensives—in spite of the official pretence that all such units had been withdrawn from the front—had provoked anti-German manifestations ; they knew that General Szombathely, the Hungarian Chief of Staff, had requested the withdrawal of all Hungarian soldiers from Russia and they decided to take no chances. On March 20 all telephonic communication with Hungary ceased.

Next day it became known that German troops, mostly from Austria, but some from Yugoslavia, were pouring into Hungary and securing the roads and railways. News reached Hungarian Legations abroad that the Prime Minister, M. Kallay, had resigned and that the Regent, Admiral Horthy, accompanied by the Foreign and War Ministers and the Chief of Staff, had arrived at the Führer's Headquarters. It was reported that there had been brief resistance to the invaders on a few airfields which they had seized. The reports were not confirmed.

The only authoritative account of the occupation and the events immediately preceding it came from the Hungarian Legation in Stockholm, where the Minister, Dr. Ullein-Reviczky, had refused to recognize a *régime* imposed by violence. The Legation had maintained communication with Budapest almost throughout the crisis. The Minister said that

M. Kallay's Government had observed troop movements in Austria with concern and had made inquiries of the German Minister, to be assured that these troops were being assembled to meet an Allied invasion from the Adriatic. The Minister denied that these movements portended any invasion of or pressure upon Hungary. On March 17 the Regent, with the Hungarian Ministers already mentioned and the Chief of Staff, went to the Führer's Headquarters at his invitation to discuss two points which had been raised some time ago by the Hungarian Government. These were (1) the recall of Hungarian troops from behind the Russian front which the Hungarian Government had repeatedly requested; (2) the Hungarian request that the retreating German troops should not traverse Hungarian territory, and that Hungary should not be used as a base for German military transport and operations.

In the Regent's absence the Germans crossed the frontier from Austria on the night of March 19 while their parachute troops seized Hungarian airfields. The German Chargé d'Affaires informed the Hungarian Foreign Office that German troops were occupying Hungary for three reasons. Firstly, the German Government could not remain inactive while Hungarian policy endangered German safety; secondly, the German Government felt obliged to prevent a repetition of Badoglio's treachery; and thirdly because they could not tolerate the threat to the safety of their troops caused by the presence in Hungary of 1,000,000 Jews and 15,000 Poles, besides Englishmen, Frenchmen, Serbs and anti-German Hungarians, behind the Russian and Balkan fronts.

A number of arrests followed. They were carried out by the parachute troops who included S.S. and Gestapo contingents. The leaders of the Liberals, Small Farmers and Social Democrats were arrested, as was the former Governor of the National Bank, Lipor Baranyay. British subjects were rounded up. The purge of Jews began. The large German population in Hungary, many of whom had been sent to Germany to train in S.S. units, joined the invaders, although most of them were Hungarian subjects.

The Government had to be changed. Admiral Horthy, although he was said to have refused the German demands, was maintained as Regent. On the night of March 22 the German News Agency issued what it described as "an official Hungarian announcement."

"In order to assist Hungary against the common enemy within the framework of the joint prosecution of the war of the European nations united in the Tripartite Pact, and in particular to intensify the effective struggle against Bolshevism by the mobilization of all energy and to take comprehensive precautionary measures, German troops have arrived in Hungary on the strength of the mutual understanding.

In lieu of the former Government, which has resigned, his Excellency the Regent has entrusted M. Sztojay, up till now Hungarian Minister in Berlin, with the task of forming a new Government. The Cabinet is composed as follows: Doeme Sztojay (Prime Minister and Foreign Minister); Jenoe Racz (Minister without Portfolio and Deputy Prime Minister); Andor Jaross (Interior); Lajos Remenyi-Schneller (Finance); Lajos Szasz (Industrial Production); Antal Kunder (Commerce and Communications); Bela Yurczek (Agriculture and Supply); Stephen Antal (Justice and provisionally in charge of Education and Propaganda); Lajos Csataj (War).

"The two allied Governments agree that the measures which have been taken will contribute, in accordance with the traditional friendship and comradeship in arms of the Hungarian and German peoples, to mobilize all the resources of Hungary for the final victory of the common cause."

The German News Agency later issued this announcement:

"The Führer has appointed, on the recommendation of Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop, Dr. Edmund Veehsenmayer as Minister and Plenipotentiary of the Greater German Reich to Hungary. Von Jagow, up to now German Minister to Hungary, has been recalled and will take up a post with the German Foreign Ministry."—*Reuter*.

The new Ministers were all persons of the second rank selected for their pro-German records. Major-General Sztojay, to whom the German News Agency had not given his military rank, had spent 16 of the last 18 years in Germany, first as military attaché, then as Minister since 1935. The new German Minister had been a *Standartenführer* in the S.S., a good qualification for German diplomats under the new dispensation, and his title of Plenipotentiary suggested that he had full directive powers such as had been given to Werner Best in Denmark (*q.v.* *The Sixteenth Quarter*, Chapter VIII, Section 2). M. Kallay, the former Prime Minister, and Countess Szapary, a lady of Polish origin, took refuge in the Turkish Legation at Budapest, as did Count Andrássy, heir to a great Hungarian name. Arrests continued. Of the Hungarian Ministers abroad, those in Stockholm, Helsinki, and Lisbon, with the Consul-General in Ankara, refused to recognize the new Government.

It was now the turn of Rumania. In February, according to Turkish reports, the Reserve Officers' Union, a body suspected of hostility to the Germans, was disbanded

at their request. On March 13 it was made known that Prince Stirbey, a great landowner and notable, who was known to be in touch with Dr. Maniu and other political leaders, had passed through Turkey on his way to Egypt to establish contact with the Allies. On March 18 the B.B.C. European service broadcast a warning to Rumania that the Russians had reached the Dniester and Rumania could no longer play for time. "If she does not break with Germany at once," the broadcast continued,

"Rumania will have lost the power to act as an independent nation. Moscow's warning made at the time of the Declaration of Teheran that 'the State which still postpones the moment for leaving the Nazi coalition is following a suicidal policy and seriously worsening its fate,' is London's warning too." This was also the attitude of Washington.

On the same day an official statement, couched in somewhat ambiguous terms, denied that Prince Stirbey had any official mission. But whether he had or not, the Germans had no intention of letting Rumania go. On March 21 Turkish reports stated that more German divisions were reported to be entering Rumania through Hungary. On March 26 Marshal Antonescu left for Hitler's Headquarters. During his absence the War Minister, General Pantazi, ordered all officers, n.c.o.s, reserve officers and men of the 1925-40 classes who had not yet served to report to the nearest recruiting depot after April 1. Other military preparations were reported. On March 27 the Marshal returned, having, it was believed, undertaken to give Germany free use of Rumania's man-power. On March 30 martial law was proclaimed in Bucharest according to Turkish correspondents, and measures were hastily taken, under German supervision, to strengthen the defences of the capital.

In Bulgaria the Germans did not force the pace. But they persuaded the Bulgarian Government to take steps to prevent internal disorders, the possibility of which had been much increased by Allied air attacks, and they appear to have reinforced their garrisons in the Black Sea ports of Varna and Burgas. These, by arrangement with the Bulgarian Government, were mainly German. In consequence of the activities of insurgent bands, not

numerous, but enterprising enough, in the Bulgarian mountains, the Government in January decided to form a State Gendarmerie, on the model of the German S.S., and at the end of March this force was reported to be complete and ready for action.

The extension of military control over all public and private motor transport and the attempts, officially described as most successful, of Hristov, the Minister of Interior, to form a "Social Force" of patriots for internal defence against subversive movements seemed to have been inspired by the German military advisers of the Government and by their Nazi mentors respectively. Before the end of March information reached Turkey that the Soviet Government, with whom Bulgaria still maintained diplomatic relations, had warned the Bulgarian Government that any change in their policy involving more active military assistance to Germany would be regarded as an unfriendly act. The Bulgarian Government certainly refused to send troops to Rumania. On the other hand, no Ministerialists and none of the leaders of the Parliamentary Opposition were ready as yet to abandon their German allies or repudiate the national claim to the territories so treacherously seized from Yugoslavia and Greece.

3 : THE WESTERN ALLIES AND THE NEUTRALS

While the attitude of Russia gave cause for some concern on the part of her major allies and for still more justifiable anxiety among the smaller nations on or near her borders, Great Britain and the United States were themselves the more eager to bring the war in the west to a speedy and victorious conclusion. They were already preparing the way for the invasion of the Continent by an aerial attack of immense and increasing violence on the war industries of the Reich and of the occupied territories and on the enemy's communications by sea and land. Troops, weapons, transport and shipping were massing for the attack at appropriate points on the British coast; and the completion of new aerodromes, the expansion of the R.A.F., and the arrival of contingent after contingent of United States airmen gave point to the comparison of Great Britain to a huge aircraft-carrier. But however heavy and destructive the impending blow might be, the experience of the Allied forces in Italy—admittedly a country favourable to the defensive—seemed to forbid over-confident expectations of a rapid success

in the west. A long and bitter struggle lasting perhaps for three months, marked by great slaughter and slow and small advances, was as likely a sequel to a successful landing as a deep penetration followed by the disruption of the German front and an Allied sweep across France to the Rhine. It was, therefore, natural that the English-speaking Powers should seek to supplement their military pressure on Germany by cutting off or greatly restricting Germany's supplies, more especially of those "strategic minerals," wolfram and chrome, for example, which she received from neutral countries. In the long run the loss or the great diminution of these supplies, essential as they were to military metallurgy, might be as heavy a blow to the Reich as the slaughter of scores of thousands of its finest troops. The Western Allies had no intention of using violence to compel neutral states to stop these exports to Germany, but they possessed means of exercising economic pressure which they were ready to use should normal diplomatic methods prove unsuccessful.

Of the five neutral states principally concerned, Argentina will be dealt with in a later chapter of this volume.¹ In her case the Allies feared the leakage of military information which would greatly advantage the U-boat commanders rather than any attempt to trade with distant and blockaded Germany. On the other hand, two European Powers, Spain and Turkey, were unquestionably supplying the Germans with valuable military material. In the case of Spain, wolfram, an ore of tungsten, which metal is almost indispensable for the manufacture of important classes of machine-tools and is also used in the manufacture of armour-piercing shells, and of radio and electric appliances, e.g. radio valves, electric bulbs and the sparking-plugs of aircraft, was being exported to Germany with other metals. But this was by no means the only cause of Allied annoyance. On January 19 Mr. Eden made an important statement in Parliament on the retention of Spanish troops in Russia.

He said that although the greater part of the Blue Division had been withdrawn from the Russian front recently, a certain number of volunteers

¹ Chapter VI, Section 2.

had remained there and had been formed into a so-called Spanish Legion. The Spanish Government had been informed of the most serious effect which the continuation of this unneutral assistance to the Axis must have on Anglo-Spanish relations; and our Ambassador in Madrid had been instructed to make further strong representations to the Spanish Government.

While Mr. Eden confined himself to the question of the Blue Division, British public was, in all probability, much more concerned by the discovery that Axis agents enjoyed sufficient freedom from Spanish police supervision to be able to introduce bombs into the cargoes of oranges shipped to this country from Spain. The explosion of a time bomb on the first orange ship bound for Britain from Spain caused no small damage and delayed the distribution of the fruit. Two more time bombs were found, one among oranges in another ship, another in a crate of onions destined for N.A.A.F.I. canteens. Bombs had also been smuggled into Gibraltar, where two Spaniards convicted of attempted sabotage were executed on January 11. Apart from these overt activities of Axis agents in Spain, the Allied Governments had reason to object to the presence at Tangier and in Spanish territory near Gibraltar of notorious German agents, who were in a position to report every movement of Allied warships and merchantmen in the neighbourhood of the Straits.

Nor was this all. A number of Italian merchant ships had sought refuge in Spanish ports at the time of Marshal Badoglio's surrender to the Allies. In spite of frequent Italian representations the Spanish Government made difficulties about releasing them. All these circumstances, joined to the recollection of the ill-treatment of British soldiers who escaped from France in 1940 and were kept for months in Spanish prison-camps, and of the strongly pro-Axis attitude of the Spanish Government for the first three years of the war, made the Western Powers less disposed to confine their action to diplomatic protests.

On January 27 Count Jordana, the Spanish Foreign Minister, in an interview given to representatives of the Falangist newspaper *Arriba*, condemned acts of sabotage which did harm to Spain and her friendly relations with other countries. At the same time he accused "certain foreign newspapers and radios" of subjecting Spain "to unfair attacks and the distortion of news," apparently, he suggested, in the hope of forcing Spain to abandon her neutrality. On the following day came an important announcement from the State Department at Washington. By its action the loading of Spanish tankers with petroleum products for Spain had been suspended at U.S. ports. This step had been taken pending reconsidera-

tion of trade and general relations between Spain and the United States in the light of the trends of Spanish policy. The announcement continued :

The Spanish Government has shown a certain reluctance to satisfy requests deemed both reasonable and important by the State Department, and concerning which representations have continuously been addressed to the Spanish Government for some time past.

Certain Italian warships and merchant ships continue to be interned in Spanish ports. Spain continues to permit the export to Germany of certain vital war materials such as wolfram. Axis agents are very active, both in continental Spain and in Spanish-African territory, as well as in Tangier.

Some portion of the Blue Division appears to be still involved in war against one of our allies, and reports have been received indicating the conclusion of a financial arrangement between the Spanish Government and Germany designed to make available to Germany substantial peseta credits which Germany unquestionably expects to apply to augmenting espionage and sabotage in Spanish territory and to intensifying opposition to us in the Iberian Peninsula. . . .

The announcement added : "This action has been taken after consultation with the British Government." The action of the United States united most Spaniards in a mood of "pained patriotic indignation and dismay."¹

In some quarters it was interpreted as an attempt to force Spain into the Allied ranks ; and, indeed, few Spaniards, even those who disliked the Axis and all its works, but failed to understand what they regarded as an abrupt change from diplomatic negotiation to plain speaking ; and few but read some ulterior motive into it. There was a tendency to blame Britain more than the United States, and even to charge her with responsibility for the losses of the Spanish civil war !²

This impression that the American and British Governments had acted precipitately was well described³ as the result of "a dangerous remoteness from reality" engendered by a totalitarian regime. It was true that in some respects the situation had improved from the Allied point of view, e.g. in the tacit permission accorded by the

. ¹ *The Times*, Madrid message, published February 3.

² Which seemed hard on a country whose Government's attempts to hold the balance between the warring factions and prevent the spread of the conflagration had exposed them to abundant criticism from Left-wingers all the world over and had not prevented all three totalitarian Powers from supporting their respective fancies with arms, experts, and, in Italy's case, with strong contingents of volunteers.

³ *The Times*, leading article of February 4.

authorities to Frenchmen and others to enter Spain by way of the Pyrenees and make their way to Allied consulates or other agencies whence they were sped on their way to Great Britain or North Africa. But the rulers of Spain, if more friendly in some respects, had been curiously obstructive in others, and the public probably had not realized how strongly German secret agents and propagandists had entrenched themselves in the Spanish cities.

One of the first results of the petrol restrictions was a meeting on February 3 of the Spanish Cabinet, over which General Franco presided. The Cabinet ratified Spain's strict neutrality as the following official announcement showed :

"The Government ratify Spain's position of strict neutrality, to which they have adhered loyally. The Government are prepared to demand with the utmost rigour the fulfilment of the duties appertaining to such strict neutrality, both from Spanish nationals and from foreign subjects.

The Government are prepared to submit to no pressure, in any circumstances whatever, against their right to maintain such a position of neutrality firmly, and every country is obliged to respect this attitude as an act of indisputable sovereignty. Furthermore the Government have discussed all precautionary measures that may be necessary to see that Spanish neutrality is respected."¹

Spanish neutrality was really all the Allies required. They did not wish to bring Spain into the war. As the British Ambassador had said on February 2, if Spain were really neutral, that was all they wanted ; and that Spain should not be used by Germany for attacks on the Allied Powers. After a while it was whispered that conversations with Spain had been opened by the British and American Governments, and on February 23 Mr. Eden confirmed this when summing-up the Parliamentary debate on foreign policy. Of Spain he said :

"We have never asked for anything from Spain but strict and honourable neutrality. In the very dark days of the war when we were alone the attitude of the Spanish Government in not giving our enemies passage through Spain was extremely helpful to us." This was especially so at the time of the North African liberation. But as time passed we had felt it right to draw Spanish attention to certain practices in which they were helping Germany. In view of the way the war had turned out the British and U.S. Governments considered that Spain could no longer plead alarm at German concentrations on her frontier as a reason for trying to placate Germany

¹ *Reuter's* version.

by lapses from neutrality. It was therefore considered time to ask her to take a stricter view of her obligations.

Britain, Mr. Eden continued, was under no obligation to part with her limited oil supplies unless she chose to do so, and German propaganda that this was an affront to Spanish honour and dignity was beside the mark. Far from having any ill-will towards Spain our desire was to see her prosperous and peaceful and conversations were now proceeding in Madrid, and the German espionage system in Tangier was being discussed.

The negotiations moved slowly, but by the end of the quarter there were distinct indications that they would end in agreement. Meanwhile, three of the Italian merchantmen detained in Spanish ports had been released.

On February 8 a brief message from *Reuter's* correspondent at Angora announced the departure of the British military mission which had been in Turkey for nearly five weeks in order to carry out the supply clauses of the Adana agreement. It was not known at first whether this betokened the break-down of these conversations. When this began to be suspected by the public and was virtually confirmed by the well-informed correspondent of *The Times* at Angora, in an article published on February 9, some Turkish newspapers stressed the deficiencies in Turkish preparedness and ascribed these to the "insufficiency" of the supplies furnished by Great Britain. These criticisms were extremely unfair. In fact the British Government had furnished Turkey ungrudgingly with arms which she could ill spare, and when a poor harvest in 1941 threatened Turkey with something near famine in 1942, the British Government came to the rescue with 70,000 tons of wheat, which relieved the situation. The fact was that, though the Turks did not care to admit it, the supply of British and American arms—and German war material too was reaching Turkey in some quantities—had exceeded Turkish capacity to absorb them. But apart from this there were signs that Turkish public opinion was increasingly averse to any departure from neutrality, and it grew increasingly probable that the Government would follow that policy until the country ran no risk of air or land attack from the Germans and Bulgars in the Balkans or from the German garrisons in the Aegean Islands. But when that happy state of affairs had arrived it was

hard to see what advantage the Allies would derive from Turkish belligerency.

The Turks found other specious reasons for neutrality. The old suspicions of Russia had revived since the Molotoff-Ribbentrop agreement at the expense of Poland in 1939. The painful experiences of the Baltic States, Finland and Rumania at Russian hands in 1939-40 gave many influential army officers reasons for maintaining that it was the Turks' interest to keep their powder dry and protect their neutrality against possible Russian encroachments after the war. While British commentators did not make sufficient allowances for Turkish anxieties on this score, they were right in urging that a self-isolated Turkey would be more exposed to such dangers than a Turkey which had taken some risks and incurred some sacrifices, however tardily, in carrying out her obligations to her British ally. Less publicly avowed was the knowledge that the peasantry had profited—one might almost say profiteered—and hoped for further profits from non-belligerency, and that a large body of public opinion, oblivious to the risk of diplomatic isolation, merely asked what material advantage Turkey would gain by participation in the war.

In these circumstances, therefore, it was not surprising that British and American shipments of arms and munitions to Turkey were suspended in February. The suspension was admitted in London early in March when it was explained that this was a strategic, and not a political decision. In a leading article published on March 4, *The Times* commented :

"... Turkish opinion on . . . participation in the war is sharply divided. One school of thought holds that the entry of Turkey into the war on the side of the United Nations would involve the nation in risks and difficulties exceeding any advantages which it might obtain by a departure from the present policy of neutrality. The other school maintains with equal force and, on a long-term reckoning, with greater cogency that that persistence in neutrality will deprive Turkey of the opportunity of co-operating on equal terms with the United Nations both now and in the critical period of international reconstruction which will follow hard on the cessation of hostilities. Recent developments make it abundantly clear that, for the present at all events, the first school is in the ascendant."

The resignation of M. Rauf Orbay, Turkish Ambassador

in London, for "reasons of health" was made known on March 10. The Ambassador had been ill, but there was also reason to believe that he had not received the information from his Government to which he considered himself entitled during the conversations on military supplies, with the result that, as a foreign observer put it, "he had talked one language at Whitehall while the Turkish military representatives used another at Angora." His successor was Bay Rushen Eshref Unaydin, who had been appointed Ambassador to Rome shortly before the fall of Mussolini, after which he was recalled by his Government.

The cessation of the military talks brought the question of chrome to the front. During the last months of 1943 and the first of 1944 Turkish chrome exports to Great Britain had shown a pronounced decrease whereas exports to Germany had increased steadily. The Turks attributed this regrettable situation to transport difficulties and they explained that the Germans had remedied the deficiencies in Turkish rolling-stock by sending a number of locomotives and wagons to Turkey to be used for the transport of chrome ore.¹ It was unfortunate, to say the least, that material of vital importance in the manufacture of cupolas, gun-shields, plates and, indeed, all forms of armour, should be reaching Germany in such quantities from an ally of Great Britain, and it was understood that the question was considered in March by the British Government and discussions with Turkey were likely to begin in April. While chrome was the most

¹ Turkish chrome was delivered to Germany under the Turco-German agreement signed by Herr Clodius in October, 1941, and supplemented by a further agreement signed in October, 1943, whereby Turkey agreed to supply 180,000 tons of chrome during 1943 and 1944. The first agreement provided that the Reich should supply Turkey with goods to the value of £T55,000,000, including £T18,000,000 worth of war material against Turkish products of equivalent value, including 45,000 tons of chrome. Turkish chrome deliveries were to be in proportion to the delivery of German goods. This part of the agreement seems to have been carried out to the extent of about 80 per cent.

The conclusion of the supplementary agreement was conditional on the prior delivery of the £T18,000,000 worth of war material, and this condition having been fulfilled, the supplementary agreement was signed. By this agreement Turkey would deliver 135,000 tons of chrome before December 31, 1944, against German war material.

militarily important Turkish export to the Reich, the Allies' attention was also drawn to the important quantities of copper, cotton and mohair which were going northwards to Germany. Of the two other neutrals which could avoid supplying Germany with war material without excessive risk, Portugal was sending the Reich even more wolfram than Spain. Sweden was exporting ball-bearings to Germany under a trade agreement announced in January of which the Allies were cognizant. In 1943 this export seemed of minor importance, but the immense havoc wrought to German ball-bearing factories by American air attack had changed the situation materially. There were consultations between the British and U.S. Governments on these matters as there had been on Spanish and Turkish exports of strategic minerals to the enemy, although in the case of Turkey the American State Department left the initiative to the Foreign Office since Turkey was Great Britain's ally. But before this the Government of the United States had taken the initiative, with full British approval and, indeed, gratitude, in a delicate matter affecting the "Second Front" more directly than any Spanish, Swedish or Turkish exports to the Reich. The next section of this chapter tells the story of this intervention.

4 : THE UNITED STATES, GREAT BRITAIN AND EIRE

On February 21 Mr. David Gray, the United States Minister in Dublin, handed a Note to Mr. de Valera on behalf of his Government. The Note requested that Axis consular and diplomatic representatives should be removed from Eire. The following summary of its contents quotes its most important passages textually.

The Note began by stating that it had become increasingly apparent that in spite of the desire of the Irish Government that its neutrality should not operate in favour of either belligerent, it had in fact operated and continued to operate in favour of the Axis and against the United Nations "on whom your security and the maintenance of your national economy depend." "One of the gravest and most inequitable results of this situation" was the opportunity for highly organized espionage, which the geographical position of Ireland afforded to the Axis and denied to the United Nations.

"Situated as you are in close proximity to Britain and divided only by an intangible boundary from Northern Ireland, where are situated important American bases with a continuous traffic to and from both countries, Axis agents enjoy an almost unrestricted opportunity for bringing military information of vital importance from Great Britain and Northern Ireland into Ireland, and from there transmitting it by various routes and methods to Germany. No opportunity corresponding to this is open to the United Nations, for the Axis has no military dispositions which may be observed from Ireland.

"We do not question the good faith of the Irish Government in its efforts to suppress Axis espionage. Whether or to what extent it has succeeded in preventing acts of espionage against American shipping and the American forces in Great Britain and Northern Ireland it is . . . impossible to determine with certainty." Nevertheless, the Note continued, the German and Japanese diplomatic and consular representatives continued to reside in Dublin and to enjoy the special privileges and immunities accorded to such officials. That Axis representatives in neutral countries used such immunities and privileges for espionage activities against the United Nations had been repeatedly demonstrated; and it "would be naive to assume that Axis agencies did not exploit the conditions to the full in Ireland as they have in other countries." The United States Government understood that the German Legation in Dublin had been in possession of a radio sending set, which was evidence of German intention to use this means of communication. Supporting evidence was furnished by two parachutists equipped with radio sending apparatus "who were dropped . . . on your territory by German planes."

"As you know from common report, United Nations military operations are in preparation in both Britain and Northern Ireland. It is vital that information . . . should not reach the enemy. Not only the success of the operations but the lives of thousands of United Nations soldiers are at stake."

"We request, therefore, that the Irish Government take appropriate steps for the recall of the German and Japanese representatives in Ireland. We should be lacking in candour if we did not state our hope that this action will take the form of the severance of all diplomatic relations between Ireland and those two countries. You will . . . readily understand why we ask as an absolute minimum the removal of these Axis representatives, whose presence in Ireland must inevitably be regarded as constituting a danger to the lives of American soldiers and the success of Allied military operations. It is hardly necessary to point out that time is of extreme importance, and that we trust your Excellency will favour us with your reply at your early convenience."

In the preamble to the Note the United States Government recalled Mr. de Valera's friendly reference to the United States on the occasion of their entry into the war in his speech at Cork on November 14, 1941, and his closing statement on that occasion, "the policy of the State remains unchanged." Mr. de Valera, however, told the American Minister verbally immediately on receiving the Note that "the request it contains is one with which it is impossible for the Irish Government to comply."

On March 10 Mr. Cordell Hull announced that a Note had been received from Dublin stating that the Irish Government were unable to comply with the American request. Their Note was released by the Irish Legation in Washington that night. It said that the American Government had given Eire an assurance on February 29 that the United States did not contemplate any military or other action against Eire in consequence of Eire's reply. The Note went on :

"The Irish Government wish to express their appreciation of this assurance. They were, indeed, surprised that so grave a Note should have been addressed to them. The terms of the Note seemed altogether out of harmony with the facts and with the traditional relations of friendship between the Irish and American peoples."

The Note declared that a demand by Eire for the removal of Axis representatives would have been the first step towards war. "The Irish Government could not entertain the American proposal without a complete betrayal of their democratic trust. Irish neutrality represents the united will of the people and Parliament. It is the logical consequence of Irish history and the forced partition of national territory."

Eire, continued the Note, had faithfully pursued the policy outlined by Mr. de Valera in the Dail in 1935 that "Eire shall never be permitted to be used as a base for attack on Britain." Outlining the measures taken to carry out that policy, the Note said : "By every means in our power we have endeavoured to prevent leakage of any information. . . . In the American Note not a single instance of neglect is alleged, and no proof of injury to American interests is adduced. Should American lives be lost it will not be through neglect of duty on the part of this State."

The Note then pointed out that for some months the German Legation had been prevented from using its radio transmitter, that the two German parachutists mentioned in the American Note, as well as three others, had been apprehended, and that ten foreigners and two Irishmen were in prison on suspicion of espionage. It went on to say that the British Government had informed the Government of Eire that they welcomed the American initiative. "We do not wish to comment on this," it added, "except to remark that it is perhaps not known to the American Government that the feelings of Irish people towards Britain have during the war undergone a considerable change precisely because Britain has not attempted to violate our neutrality." The American Government would surely agree that it would be regrettable if any incident altered this happy state of affairs. "The Irish Government are . . . safeguarding and will safeguard the interests of the United States, but they must in all circumstances protect the neutrality of the Irish State and the democratic way of life of the Irish people." Their attitude would continue to be determined, not by fear of any measures which might be employed against them, but by the good will and fundamental friendship between the two peoples.¹

That the British Government had been consulted by the Government of the United States and were in full

¹ *Reuter's* text.

agreement with their action was shown by a Note delivered by Sir John Maffey, the United Kingdom Representative in Eire, to Mr. de Valera on February 22, in which the United Kingdom Government made it clear that they warmly welcomed this initiative and supported the American request. It may be added that Mr. de Valera's statement in his reply to the American Note that Irish feeling towards Britain had changed for the better provoked the retort in some British quarters that Irishmen should realize that British feeling towards Eire had changed for the worse. At the same time there was no talk of sanctions, military or economic, against the Eire Government in this country, where it was felt that on purely legalistic grounds Mr. de Valera's interpretation of his country's neutrality was correct. His own good faith had never been in question. But the presence in Eire of Axis representatives at a time when military operations were about to begin was regarded as dangerous, and it was pointed out that Eire owed her immunity from the fate of other neutrals to the power and the sacrifices of Great Britain and the United States. On the other hand, no one acquainted with Irish conditions but had to recognize that Mr. de Valera's policy was supported by a great majority of the electorate in the 26 counties of Eire.

The British Government took swift action in consequence of the refusal of the Government of Eire to accept the American proposals. On the night of March 12 the Home Office announced that, subject to certain exceptions, all travel between Great Britain on the one hand and Northern Ireland and Eire on the other must be suspended for military reasons from March 13 until further notice.

"No more permits or visas for travel between the islands will be granted, except for business or work of urgent national importance or on compassionate grounds of the most urgent and compelling character. No further leave certificates for Irish workers to return to Ireland from this country will be granted while the restrictions continue."

The announcement added that persons already granted permits or duly authorized leave certificates might use them during the period of their validity, but holders of six-monthly return visas would not be allowed to use them for returning to Ireland while the restrictions were in force.

Exit permits for business reasons would not be granted unless the appropriate Government Department certified that the journey was essential in the national interest and could not be postponed. The certificates hitherto furnished by trade organizations or chambers of commerce would no longer be accepted at the Permit Office.

Replying to a question in Parliament on March 14, Mr. Churchill said that the initiative had been taken by the U.S. Government in this matter, but that the British Government had been consulted and had given the American approach their full support.

We had for some time taken measures to minimize the dangers arising from "the substantial disservice to the Allied cause included in the retention" by Mr. de Valera of the German and Japanese representatives in Dublin. The time had come when these measures must be strengthened and the restrictions on travel to Ireland were a first step in a policy to isolate Great Britain from Southern Ireland and to isolate Southern Ireland from the outer world during the critical period that was approaching.

"I need scarcely say," continued the Prime Minister, "how painful it is to us to take such measures in view of the large numbers of Irishmen who are fighting so bravely in our armed forces and the many deeds of personal heroism by which they have kept alive the martial honour of the Irish race. No one, I think, can reproach us with precipitancy. No nation in the world would have been so patient. In view, however, of the fact that both British and British Dominion lives and the lives of the soldiers of our allies are imperilled, we are bound to do our utmost to obtain effective security for the forthcoming operations.

There is also the future to consider. If a catastrophe were to occur to the Allied armies which could be traced to the retention of German and Japanese representatives in Dublin, a gulf would be opened between Great Britain on the one hand and Southern Ireland on the other which even generations would not bridge. His Majesty's Government would also be held accountable by the people of the United States if it could be shown that we had in any way failed to do everything in our power to safeguard their troops."

The State Department's request was approved by the Governments of the Dominions. At Canberra on March 13 Mr. Curtin said that an official of the Irish Government had visited Mr. Bruce, the Australian High Commissioner in London, and asked him to ask the Commonwealth Government to request the U.S. Government to withdraw their Note. The request had been refused and the Government of Eire had been informed that Australia hoped they would accede to the American demand. At Ottawa Mr. King told the Dominion House of Commons that the Canadian Government were in full sympathy with the United States representations and saw no reason

whatever to intervene when Mr. de Valera sought their offices to obtain the withdrawal of the Note. New Zealand approved the American attitude. Of South Africa, Mr. de Valera requested nothing and obtained nothing save a sympathetic cable from Dr. Malan, the leader of the Opposition. In Australia Dr. Mannix, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, at a St. Patrick's Day gathering, suggested that Mr. Curtin's views were not shared by a majority of his party and were repudiated by a large body of Australians. Dr. Mannix had always been a stout supporter of Mr. de Valera's policies.

Broadcasting on the same day, Mr. de Valera said that the Irish people had had many crises in their history, which had found them with the qualities which he felt they could call on unreservedly to-day. When external force succeeded they had never abandoned the struggle nor had they ceded their rights or surrendered their will. Even in their defeats and failures they had been in the lasting sense victorious, and they had outlived the evils that were done to them. In all the long period of endurance their people had been maligned, for that was the way of the strong towards the weak. "You know it, and you are prepared that it should come."

This sounded very tragic, but for the present the British Government went no further than imposing restrictions on travel to Ireland. American comment usually supported the State Department's request. The strong Irish-American community mostly resented Mr. de Valera's attitude through fear that it might endanger the safety of relatives in the American armed forces, or regretted it on the ground that it seemed likely to doom Eire to isolation after the war. The German Press, as was expected, enlarged on the tyrannous methods of the Allies towards small nations.

NOTE.—For further reactions in Eire see Chapter XI of this volume.

CHAPTER II

MEDITERRANEAN AND MIDDLE EAST

I : THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

The course of the war in Italy was distinctly disappointing to the Allies. They suffered no serious reverses, they made a number of small territorial gains, they carried out a successful large-scale landing operation in rear of the enemy's position on the River Garigliano. But they were unable to exploit this success sufficiently to compel the enemy to retreat from his powerfully defended and well-constructed "Gustav line" north of the Garigliano and a protracted and violent attack on Cassino failed to drive the enemy from the ruins of that much-bombed and bombarded town, and suffered possibly even heavier loss than it inflicted on the Germans. The Allied troops fought well; they were excellently supported by their navies whenever and wherever these could take part in the fighting; in the air they enjoyed a great superiority both in numbers and in quality to the enemy. But they found that the results of direct air attack on a well-trained field army holding strong positions fell short of the over-sanguine expectations of their Air Staff; and they also discovered that the topography of peninsular Italy gives great advantages to the defence.

During the first two or three days of January the weather was so stormy on the Adriatic side of Italy that important movements were almost, and flying conditions quite, impossible. Indeed there was little flying on this flank during the first ten days of the New Year. The weather was not so unfavourable on the western side of Italy and on the night of January 4-5 the 5th Army attacked on a ten-mile front on each side of the Capua-Vairano-Rome road and was heavily engaged in the San Vittore region. Next day American troops took Monte Maio, five miles

north-west of Venafrò and cut the mountain road from Acquafondata through Cervaro to San Vittore, which was a useful supply road to the Germans. The special correspondent of *The Times* (*loc. cit.* January 8) described the attack as

"a slow, arduous assault against bitter enemy resistance . . . impeded further by heavy snowfalls in the mountains and lesser heights across which lies the way of British and American troops in this sector." The fighting at San Vittore itself had been particularly fierce. About half the village was carried by the Americans in their first assault, but the Germans now concentrated their powerful and determined defence within three strong-points. "All approaches to the village and to the area around it, except for the enemy's single passage of withdrawal, are being heavily shelled by German artillery."

Nevertheless, San Vittore fell, after two days' bitter street fighting, on January 7, and on January 9 they took the La Chiaia heights just south of Cervaro, while British troops forced the passage of the River Peccia, south of Rocca Devandre, and held their valuable bridgehead against heavy shelling. By January 11 the Allies had cleared most of the heights overlooking Cervaro, and on January 12 American troops took that town.

The Germans made a vigorous attempt to retake Cervaro next day, but they failed, and after further gains the Americans on January 15 carried the strong hostile defences on Monte Trocchio on the southern side of the Via Casilina, as the Rome road is called. This gave them the last height south of the highroad before they reached the Rapido River. This stream, wrote the special correspondent of *The Times* (*loc. cit.* January 17),

"roughly marks the Germans' 'Gustav Line' along which they have built up defences ahead of Cassino." North of Monte Maio the French had been making steady progress in the Apennines, and on January 15 General Juin's troops carried Cardito, after previously beating off five counter-attacks on the positions which they had painfully won on the heights of the San Pietro ridge. From Cardito the French closed in on the strongly fortified village of San Elia, which they captured on January 17, reaching the upper waters of the Rapido. The Americans crossed it at one point north of Cassino.

On the same evening the British attacked the lower reaches of the Garigliano in strength. They crossed on rafts and in boats at three points; near Argento, inland from the sea; at a point three miles south-west of Sujo

near the Capua-Rome railway; and opposite Suio itself. By January 19 the three bridgeheads had been enlarged to a maximum depth of two miles, and our troops near the sea had reached the outskirts of Minturno, where they took prisoners from the 94th German Division. The French made some further gains in the mountains north-east of Cassino where, it was announced on January 19, they had made 600 prisoners between January 12 and 18. On January 17 and 18 British warships shelled enemy positions on the gulf of Gaeta. On January 20 the British took Minturno after a hard fight and some seven miles inland they drew near Castelforte, as strong a position as its name implied and stoutly defended by the Germans. Further up the Rapido the Americans enlarged their bridgehead. In the meanwhile the Eighth Army, after many patrol encounters wherein Maori, Canadian and Indian troops distinguished themselves, had made limited advances against obstinate opposition to points about three miles north of ruined Ortona.

At 2 a.m. on January 22 the Allied forces opened a new offensive on a new Italian front which was thus described in a special announcement from Allied Headquarters in the Mediterranean :

"British and American troops of General Clark's Fifth Army landed early this morning on the west coast of Italy, deep in the rear of present enemy front-line positions. Naval and air forces are supporting the ground troops. The landing was co-ordinated with strong attacks by other units of the Fifth Army, including British, French and Americans, in the Liri Valley.

The amphibious attack began before dawn with Allied troops of the Fifth Army going ashore from landing craft along a beach front extending several miles from north to south. British Commandos and American Rangers are participating in this assault. The operations in Italy are under the direction of General Alexander, Commander of the Allied Central Mediterranean Force, formerly 15th Army Group.

Units of the British, United States and Greek Navies carried out the successful landing of British and American troops of the Fifth Army. . . . The warships which escorted the force are, with the addition of Dutch and French ships, supporting the operations with their gunfire. Admiral Lowry, U.S. Navy, is in command of the naval forces. Admiral Troubridge, Royal Navy, commands that part of the force which landed British troops. . . .

An earlier announcement dealt with air operations and with the progress of the Allies to the south. Here the Americans forced a crossing of the Rapido "under withering enemy fire," French troops made further ground

and the British took Trimonsuoli. The landing had been preceded by heavy air attacks ranging as far as Istres le Tube and Salon aerodromes in southern France and directed chiefly against the enemy's rail and road communications. Twenty enemy aircraft were destroyed and a merchant vessel was sunk on January 21. Five Allied aircraft were reported missing. Next day the enemy's communications were again heavily raided. Fifteen enemy machines were destroyed against our nine missing.

The first news of the landings "south of Rome" was satisfactory. The enemy appear to have been surprised, for two hours passed before a shot was fired at our troops and a much longer time had elapsed when the *Luftwaffe* began to react. About 100 sorties of its fighter-bombers were recorded on January 22 against more than twelve times that number on the part of the Allies. The threat from the rear to the Gustav line seemed the more significant since the Germans, apparently discounting any possibility of a sea-borne attack, had moved three Panzer Grenadier Divisions, the 3rd, 29th and 90th¹ from the neighbourhood of Rome to reinforce the Hermann Göring (Panzer), 15th (Panzer Grenadier), 5th (Mountain), and the 71st, 94th and 334th (Infantry) Divisions on the front. Of these the Hermann Göring, 3rd, 15th and 29th and 90th Panzer Grenadiers, and 94th had been identified on the Fifth Army front just before the landing.

For the first three days after the seizure of what was known variously as the Anzio beach-head and as the Nettuno beach-head from the two small ports which fell into Allied hands, the operation appeared to be going well. Large reinforcements of men and material reached the troops, perhaps three divisions strong, who had first landed. They had encountered only hastily organized battle groups of Germans and by January 25 they had extended their beach-head to a maximum depth of about 11 miles inland, and the Appian Way was under the fire of their guns. By this time, however, the *Luftwaffe*, which had done little during the first two days, had become increasingly active. On the afternoon of January 24 German high-level bombers, torpedo-bombers, and dive-bombers opened an attack on the beaches, and especially

¹The 90th Division was a second edition of the 90th (Light) Division of the Afrika Korps, which had been captured in Tunisia. It had been withdrawn from the Adriatic front at the beginning of the year to re-fit.

on shipping, which lasted for five hours. An American broadcaster said, speaking from Naples on the night of January 25:

"There were three hospital ships in the southern sector of the bay of Anzio, all of them lighted up like Christmas trees. I have before me the S O S sent out by these vessels between 5.42 and 7.27 last night. The first came from the hospital ship *Leicester*, and read: 'Have been bombed and am on fire.' Then came three more messages in quick succession, stating that the hospital ships *St. Andrew* and *Leicester* were being continually bombed and finally the same two ships reported: 'Hospital ship *St. David* sunk.' The *St. Andrew* added: 'We are picking up survivors'."

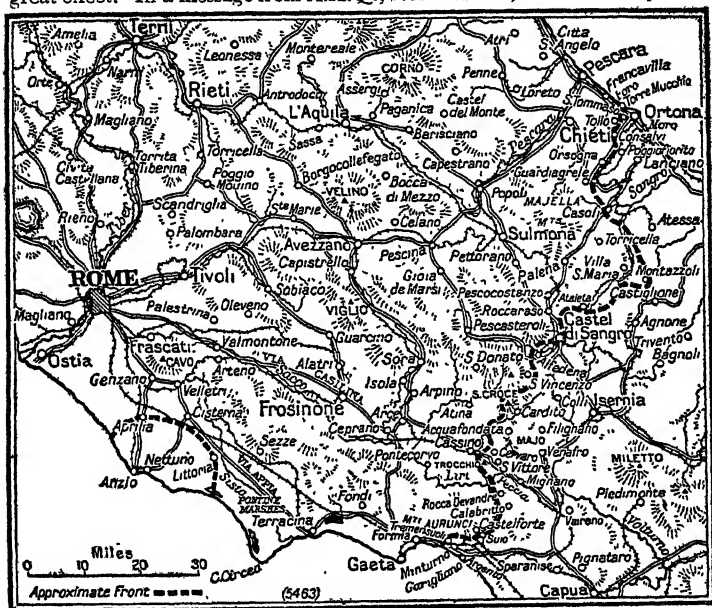
Losses and damage were by no means confined to hospital ships. They might have been very heavy but for the intervention of Allied fighters which broke up the attacking formations and shot down a number of bombers. Fifteen hostile aircraft were destroyed on this and other Italian fronts for the loss of 11 Allied machines. But a significant statement that bad weather had limited air operations, which appeared in the announcements of Advanced H.Q. and Allied Air Force H.Q. in Italy on January 25, indicated difficulties to come. On January 26 *Reuter's* correspondent in the beach-head drew attention to the increase of German air strength. "The Germans," he reported,

"are calling in all available bombers from as far away as Bordeaux, including long-range Heinkel 177s, in an effort to knock out our armada of supply ships lying off Anzio and Nettuno. Thanks to a combination of a terrific curtain of *flak* bursting from naval and shore batteries and a continual umbrella of Allied fighters maintaining a 24-hour patrol, his success has been limited. . . ." He had, in fact, met with some success, although less than he pretended. Meanwhile, Allied Force Advanced H.Q.¹ reported advances by Allied troops against gradually increasing but not yet formidable opposition. On January 27 it reported that the beach-head had been "improved by limited advances," and on the following day that British and American troops had "further enlarged their beach-head south of Rome," and that British troops had repulsed a heavy counter-attack and taken many prisoners.

This attack would seem to have been delivered near Carroceto (Aprilia), some ten miles north of Anzio, on the road joining the Appian Way above Albano. By this time elements of two German divisions, the Hermann Göring and the 29th Panzer Grenadiers, had been identified on this front. On January 27 there were many air encounters over the beach-head in which 25 German aircraft were brought down. Strong forces of heavy Allied bombers also attacked Salon, Istres le Tube, and Montpellier aerodromes in southern France, and made many hits on hangars and dispersal areas. Fifty hostile machines were brought down in these and other engage-

¹ Henceforth A.F.A.H.Q.

ments during the day against seven Allied aircraft, the pilots of three of which were saved. On January 29 A.F.A.H.Q. reported that units of the Royal Navy continued to give powerful support to the Fifth Army in the beach-head sector, silencing batteries, breaking up columns of troops and transport and bisecting a supply train by a direct hit. Allied aircraft attacked numerous targets during the week-end, destroying many hostile machines, and on January 30 "the airfields at Villorba, Udine, Maniago, and Lavarino were attacked by strong forces of heavy bombers" with great effect. In a message from A.H.Q., North Africa, *Reuter's* correspond-



ITALIAN FRONT, JANUARY 26, 1944

ent said that the heavies escorted by Thunderbolts "bombed airfields from which enemy bombers coming from the Balkans refuel before attacking Allied shipping off the beach-heads." The Americans claimed 36 enemy aircraft in this attack against the loss of only one machine. Sixty-three German aircraft were shot down in all operations on the Italian front that day, and only six Allied machines were missing.

The Allied troops in the beach-head sector had occupied Carroceto on January 29, and by the end of January their advanced elements had reached the Appian Way and the outskirts of Campoleone. But by this time it was clear that the expectation of a rapid advance inland against the communications of the Germans on the

Gustav line which had run high in Great Britain and the United States after the landing must be abandoned. In an appreciation of the situation on the Anzio front the Military Correspondent of *The Times* wrote (*loc. cit.* February 1) that the Germans had reported the development of an Allied attack from the beach-head. Their reserves which had been drawn southwards from Rome towards the Gustav line

"have returned to face the Allied landing-force . . ." and he pointed out that the Allies had kept this force "racing up and down," and that with its recall northwards the enemy might have some difficulty in holding the Gustav line. "Yet, though the Allies began by catching the enemy at a grave disadvantage and have since outmanœuvred him, they have not actually interfered with this movement of reserves. They devoted themselves to building up supplies in their beach-head and fortifying it. . . . No attempt was made to reach the Alban Hills, still less to enter the valley of the Sacco beyond and cut the enemy's main communications with Rome. The landing force may have moved as quickly as it could, but if . . . so it has been compelled to give the defence time to congeal. . . . The future must prove whether we have justly balanced prudence against rashness; on that subject there can so far be room for speculation, but certainly not for a verdict. Military history abounds in instances of a detached force set across the enemy's lines of communications being unable to prevent him from breaking out and being badly mauled in attempting to do so. Against that it warns us that the opportunities provided by surprise are fleeting."

The writer will add nothing to Captain Falls's comment save to chronicle the unconfirmed report that the American commander of the force landed on the beach-head was recalled later; and to note that if it had been hoped that the threat to Marshal Kesselring's rear would induce him to evacuate his Gustav line, that hope was disappointed. A copy of an order from the Führer dated January 24, which was found on the Fifth Army front, read:

"To be read out to all troops at 0600 hours:

The Führer orders that the Gustav position shall be held at all costs, as a wholly successful defence would have important political repercussions. The Führer relies on every yard of ground being contested fiercely."

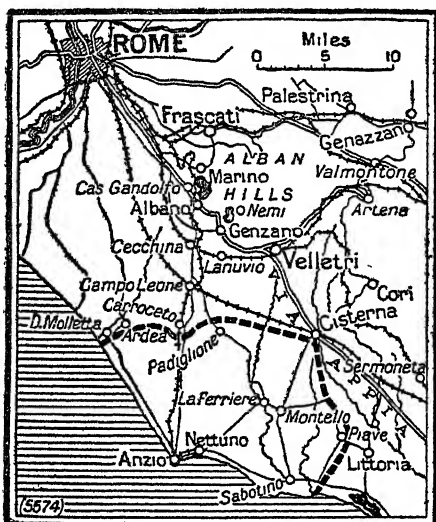
On the Garigliano the Fifth Army had maintained its pressure until the end of January, especially on the Cassino-Minturno sector of the front, and the Americans dented the enemy's line on a fairly wide front and occupied Cairo and Montevilla, taking 250 prisoners.

The French took, lost and re-took Monte Croce, but no serious breach was made in the German front. Meanwhile, the Allied Air Forces, tactical and strategic, continued to strike many blows at the German communications and transport and to cover the beach-head against the enemy's frequent raids. They flew far more sorties than the Germans, and the figures for the four days, January 27-30, showed 153 German aeroplanes lost against 19 Allied machines. British, American and other Allied warships also took a hand in the fighting, shelling positions on the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic flanks of the German line.

February saw heavy fighting on the Fifth Army fronts. The enemy, who had built up his strength around the Anzio beach-head, now as large as the Isle of Wight, delivered two full-scale attacks here and had opened a third on February 29. In the south began the long struggle for Cassino which was to last with occasional pauses almost until the end of the quarter. Here the Germans showed a resolution remarkable even in an army of such high repute, and a mastery of defensive tactics. The losses on both sides were heavy, both there and on the Anzio positions; but the Allies could at least claim that by their occupation of the beach-head they had forced the enemy to employ troops which would otherwise have been resting and refitting at Rome and farther north, and to bring divisions from other fronts to incur serious wastage in attacks which were often dangerous, yet never quite successful.

The Allied advance from the beach-head on January 30 was soon held up by counter-attacks, and on February 3 the Germans opened a holding offensive between Cisterna and Carroceto. At least four divisions were employed, the 26th (Panzer), 29th (Panzer Grenadier), Hermann Göring (Panzer) and 715th (Motorized Infantry), this last from France, as well as part of the *Reichsführer's* S.S. Division of Panzer Grenadiers, known commonly as "Himmler's Own." Three attacks supported by heavy artillery were directed on the British front north of the village of Padiglione, the fourth, against

the American left, came from Cisterna. Fighting lasted into the night of February 4 and the enemy, though he made no deep penetration, compelled the Allies to "adjust" their front, a euphemism for the withdrawal of troops from salients which might otherwise have been pinched off. On February 7 the enemy for the first time



THE ANZIO BEACH-HEAD, FEBRUARY 18, 1944

for over a week sent strong formations of fighters and fighter-bombers against the beach-head. He lost 19 machines, 24 in all operations during the day, but he succeeded in scoring some hits on the Allied positions and his long-range artillery firing from the Alban Hills gave much trouble. A major attack was expected and it came on February 9. On February 10 the American Under-Secretary for War, Mr. Robert Patterson, spoke in rather serious terms of the Allied position to the Press. The Germans, he said,

"are attacking the Allied position with a formidable force, and the danger to the British and American troops there is not to be minimized. However, our men are firmly established and have substantial aerial protection." He added that the enemy had taken full advantage of bad weather which had

interfered with our shipping and aerial supremacy, but he thought that their heaviest attacks had yet to be felt. They had brought up more tanks and abundant artillery, and their long-range pieces could reach Anzio harbour from the Alban Hills. The Allies had yielded a small amount of ground, but they had effectively beaten off the enemy's tank attacks and taken a number of prisoners.

The fighting continued, chiefly in the Carroceto and Cisterna areas, but the intervention of Allied air squadrons in great strength, including formations of heavy bombers, unquestionably improved the situation. Fortresses and Liberators attacked German supply routes to the beach-head; Thunderbolts and Lightning fighter-bombers attacked tactical targets immediately behind the enemy lines and Bostons of the Desert Air Force raided hostile transport. So although yet another German Division, the 65th (Infantry), was engaged on this front, the enemy was held, and on February 13 the position was described as "generally satisfactory."

It had, however, caused some anxiety. On February 12 the following statement was issued from 10 Downing Street:

"The Prime Minister has received reports from General Wilson and General Alexander in which both commanders express their confidence that the great battle now proceeding for the capture of Rome will be won. In the bridgehead itself the Allies have a very strong army and a superiority both in artillery and tanks. Although spells of bad weather interrupt from time to time the delivery of supplies, the amount landed . . . substantially exceeds the schedule prescribed before the operation was begun, owing to the reserves . . . built up in the fair weather period. All battles are anxious as they approach the climax, but there is no justification for pessimism, according to the latest reports from the responsible authorities."

On the same day General Mark Clark congratulated the troops in the beach-head on their splendid achievement in forcing the Germans to bring troops there from France, northern Italy and the Balkans and from the Cassino area.

The Germans had made very boastful predictions of their intentions on February 9. Mr. Robert Patterson's statement had caused some disquiet, and Mr. Churchill, as he stated in Parliament on February 22, asked for a stricter censorship

"on alarmist reports about the position in the bridge-head sent, not by the correspondents there, but by persons in Naples and Algiers." Such words as "desperate," he added, "ought not to be used about the position in a battle of this kind when they are false. Still less should they be used if they were true. In the first case they needlessly distress the public; in the

second they encourage the enemy to attack." The result of Mr. Churchill's intervention, which was aimed not at the correspondents at the front, but at the sensationalists in the rear, was the imposition of a stricter censorship on war correspondents which had provoked questions in Parliament and protests from metropolitan, provincial and Empire newspapers and news agencies. They asked for the restoration to correspondents of the right to transmit messages by radio and urged that the charges against correspondents should be specified and that the War Office should state by whom and on what evidence these charges had been made. Mr. Churchill made it clear that he had not made any charge against the correspondents at the front and welcomed the restoration of the radio facilities of which they had been temporarily deprived. It seemed that subordinates had gone much further than the Prime Minister had intended in imposing these restrictions.

The Germans did not wait long before renewing their attack in greater strength. On February 16 they opened their second major offensive. By this time their force in Italy south of Rome was estimated at 18 divisions, which were assigned to two Armies, the XIVth, commanded by General Eberhard von Mackensen, facing the Allies on the Anzio beach-head, and the Xth, under General Heinrich von Vietinghoff, on the entire southern front from sea to sea. The Special Correspondent of *The Times* (*loc. cit.* February 22) gave the enemy's "Order of Battle" on the Italian front as thus :

"When the Germans began their major attack . . . they threw in six divisions"—the 26th (Panzer), the 3rd and 29th (Panzer Grenadier), the 114th and 715th (Motorized Infantry) and the 65th (Infantry). "The remaining three in the beach-head area are the Hermann Göring (Panzer), the S.S. Reichsführer (Panzer Grenadier) and the 4th (Parachute) Divisions." These were in reserve. The German divisions outside the Anzio region were the 1st (Parachute), 5th (Mountain), 15th and 19th (Panzer Grenadier), and the 44th, 71st, 94th, 305th and 334th Divisions.¹ "The bulk of these are opposite the Allied Fifth Army and the major force is in the Cassino sector."

The attack, which was supported by exceptionally heavy artillery fire and relatively frequent attacks by the *Luftwaffe*, made ground at first. On February 17, as in the first major attack, Allied aircraft in great strength checked or slowed the advance, and on February 18 the enemy seems to have reached his farthest point of advance, the apex of a salient driven into the Allied lines about 4,000 yards south of Carroceto. He had inflicted considerable losses on the Allies, but his own loss, especially from our artillery concentrations, had been heavy, and

¹ The 90th (Panzer Grenadier) Division was resting north of Rome.

On February 19 an Allied counter-attack with armour and infantry, vigorously supported by artillery and by the Air Forces, regained perhaps 800 yards of ground. Thereafter the violence of the attack died down. On February 21 A.H.Q. made the following announcement which suggested that in General Alexander's opinion the crisis of the battle had passed :

"In the Anzio beach-head Fifth Army infantry and tank units threw the enemy back after resisting for 48 hours a fierce attack by six divisions. Our effort was very greatly assisted by the magnificent support given by Allied naval units, Allied air formations and both British and American artillery. Several hundred prisoners were captured and the enemy suffered very heavy casualties. Both British and American units participated in this successful defence and counter-attack. Enemy aircraft were active and our troops were bombed and strafed on several occasions. . . . M.A.A.F.¹ flew approximately 900 sorties. Enemy activity over the beach-head amounted to about 100 sorties."

After the failure of the attack, which had small gains of ground to show for heavy casualties, the fighting on the Anzio front was confined for over a week to patrol clashes and small local actions in which the enemy seldom employed more than a company of infantry. On February 29, however, the Germans came on again. They attacked with five divisions, but three of these, the 26th (Panzer), the 114th (Rifle) and the 362nd (Infantry)—the last two newcomers to southern Italy—were concentrated on an extremely narrow front, about 1,000 yards on the Carroceto side of Cisterna. The enemy probably hoped to strike the "hinge" between the American and British troops, but in fact his attack struck the 3rd United States Division, a seasoned force which made a stout resistance. The Americans had to yield some ground to the first rush of men and armour, but they fell back fighting, and their counter-attack was swift and effective. By midday on March 1 the enemy had been driven back to his starting-point, having inflicted heavy losses, but having himself suffered more severely. Attacks on other parts of the beach-head were beaten off. The Germans used Tiger tanks in their attack. They had experimented in their previous major assault with remote-control tanks, really miniature tanks carrying about 1,000 lb. of high

¹ i.e. Mediterranean Allied Air Force.

explosive which were to be steered by wireless into our positions and to explode there. None succeeded in reaching the Allied lines owing to the intensity of our barrage. After this reverse the enemy made no further attack in force during March, although minor engagements in which each side attempted to improve its line or deprive the enemy of some vantage-point were frequent. The Allied Navies and air squadrons continued to support the forces within the beach-head. On March 7 the First Lord, in the course of his statement on the Navy Estimates, said that the Anzio operation had cost the Navy the cruisers *Penelope* (Captain O. Belben) and *Spartan*. The first had a magnificent record and played a great part in Admiral Vian's brilliant action on March 22, 1942,¹ which inspired Mr. Forester's admirable book, *The Ship*. This he dedicated to her officers and men. The *Spartan* was a new cruiser completed after the outbreak of war. The destroyers *Janus* and *Inglefield* were also lost off the beach-head.

The course of events on the southern or trans-Italian front during February and March must now be outlined. On the Adriatic flank, where the Eighth Army held our front, there were no important actions. During the first half of February we captured some villages, and on February 16 it was announced that the Second Polish Army Corps had reached the front. During the second half of February and early March bad weather greatly restricted operations, and the last fortnight of the quarter saw no further change.

On the Fifth Army front the advance of the Allied forces towards the ideally powerful stronghold of Cassino was slow and painful. On February 9 U.S. troops were reported

"to be making gradual progress in their attacks on the outskirts of the town and in the hills on the west," but "the major part of the town still remains in German hands and the enemy is still in possession of the crest of Monte Cassino high above it." (*The Times*, February 9.) During the next few days the Americans made slow and costly progress into the town and the Allies realized that the enemy was deriving great benefit from his occupation of the famous monastery founded by St. Benedict in the sixth century. From its buildings, which crowned a steep hill 1,600 feet above the battle-

¹ Cf. *The Tenth Quarter*, pp. 136-37.

field, he could see almost everything in our lines, and there was abundant evidence that he had established wireless installations there and held the building and hill-top with machine-gun detachments.

The Allies were most unwilling to shell or bomb this famous abbey. The related subject of the exposure of Rome to attack had been much discussed in the British and U.S. Press, and Lord Lang of Lambeth, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter published by *The Times* on January 31, had made an eloquent plea for the protection from the destruction caused by modern warfare of a city which, he wrote, "belongs not to one country, but to the world and

"represents as no other city can the whole history of European civilization and religion." He urged that information should be made as available and full and instructions as explicit as possible so that when the Allies marched on Rome bombs (or shells) "may not be dropped in the near neighbourhood of the Vatican or of any of the principal ancient sites and churches within the city," even were this "to involve the loss of some temporary military advantage."¹

The Monte Cassino Monastery offered the same problem of conscience to the Western Allies, if on a minor scale. On February 13 warning leaflets were dropped urging Italians who might have taken refuge in the monastery to leave it before it was bombarded. On February 15 the Special Correspondent of *The Times* at the front reported

"The Allied command's decision, carefully deliberated and most reluctantly adopted, to bomb the abbey at Monte Cassino was put into execution this morning," and he described how squadrons of aircraft had bombed it for two hours. "The army command," he added, "took this grave decision only after the most careful consideration of the facts and after reference to London and Washington." The hill on which it stood had become the main bastion of the Gustav line; and the abbey itself had been converted into a strong point defended by at least 30 machine-guns. Heavy guns completed the work of the bombers and left the monastery a heap of ruins.

On that day a bare third of Cassino was in American hands. The attack was pressed for another two days and Indian and New Zealand troops entered the battle. But the bombing of the monastery had not materially

¹ A discussion followed in the correspondence columns of *The Times*, in which the two opposite schools of thought, those who argued that the noblest works of art were of less importance than a single human life, and those who maintained that such an attitude was a denial of spiritual value—an example of the Latin "*et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*"—had their say.

altered the situation. The Germans fought on stubbornly in the town, and after February 18 bad weather and exhaustion brought the attack to a temporary close. Meanwhile, several German attempts to recapture Monte Ornito and the height of Cerasole north of Castelforte had been repulsed by British troops. The difficulties of this mountain fighting, where even in favourable weather it might take 12 hours for relays of stretcher-bearers to carry a casualty from the fighting line to the nearest casualty clearing station, and food, ammunition and equipment had to be carried to heights of perhaps 4,000 feet on pack-mules or on men's backs, were not sufficiently appreciated at home.

The lull lasted until March 15. On that day the Allied Air Forces made a concentrated bombing attack on Cassino. Wave after wave of aircraft dropped altogether more than 1,400 tons of bombs on a target of less than a square mile in area between 8.30 a.m. and noon. When the bombing ceased the artillery opened fire and our infantry pressed forward to the attack, supported by tanks. The New Zealanders, who, with Indian troops, formed the spearhead of the attack, soon found that the bombing had added to their difficulties by converting the stone houses of the town into heaps of rubble which delayed the tanks until sappers could clear the debris away. Gradually they pressed forward, and on March 20 the Germans were reported to be holding only three points in the town, the Hotel Continental, the ducal palace, and the Roman amphitheatre, strong stone buildings covering the highway leading west to Rome. But they were men of the fanatical and admirably trained 1st (Parachute) Division, who showed an almost Japanese readiness to fight it out rather than surrender, and they were able to reoccupy several points from which they had been driven by the New Zealanders' first onset. On the Monastery Hill a small force of Indian troops had managed to establish themselves about 250 feet below the summit, known officially as point 435, but to the troops as Hangman's Hill. There they hung on, supplied by parachute, under heavy fire, for more than a week until

the difficulty of supplying them compelled their withdrawal. Among the heaps of rubble which had been the town the struggle continued, but on March 26 it was becoming evident that the attack had shot its bolt; the German parachute troops were receiving reinforcements of Panzer Grenadiers and had recaptured several



CASSINO, MARCH 20, 1944

more positions. On March 27 the battle had declined to an artillery duel, and on March 30 Mr. Stimson told his Press conference that the Allied attack had subsided "without achieving the results we had hoped. The simple fact is that the Germans stopped us."

A semi-official statement made on March 26 gave the following explanation of this repulse. "The bombing and shelling had not done as much as was expected towards reducing the power of the garrison to hold out . . . probably because of the enemy's ability to bring in fresh troops and material and the depth and strength of the underground positions to which the Germans retired until the air attacks ended. Further, a change in the weather had caused an attack on Monastery Hill to miscarry. . . . Finally, the picked German troops in Cassino fought with such determination and skill that they were able to stabilize the situation on the western edge of the town."¹

¹ *B.I.N.*, vol. xxi, No. 7.

There had been no major encounters during February and March on other sectors of the Fifth Army front in the Garigliano Valley—except about Monte Ornito. Losses on both sides had been heavy. On February 15 Mr. Churchill stated in Parliament that the British casualties, in which those of Dominion and Indian troops were included, between September 8 and February 12, i.e. before the Cassino fighting and the second and third major attacks on the Anzio beach-head, totalled 36,626, of whom 7,635 were killed and 5,708 prisoners. This did not include Naval or Air Force casualties. U.S. casualties during much the same period were understood to number about 25,000. Close on 4,000 Germans were captured in the Anzio beach-head and the enemy's losses there in killed and wounded were estimated in March at about 20,000 all told.

The co-operation of the Allied Air Forces with the ground troops was by no means confined to the protection of the Anzio beach-head and to tactical operations and reconnaissance on the Fifth and Eighth Army fronts. Besides attacking the Germans in Yugoslavia¹ they maintained continuous pressure on the enemy's communications in central and northern Italy. It is impossible to enumerate all these operations, but the lists published in two numbers of the fortnightly *Bulletin of International News (B.I.N.)* give a remarkable picture of the furious and far-reaching activities of the bomber squadrons and their escorts. Here is the first :

"The Allied Air Forces maintained their offensive against airfields, railway and road centres and enemy positions, meeting with very little opposition, but hampered by much bad weather. Among places bombed were Modena, Brescia, Ferrara, Mantua, Verona, Perugia, Leghorn, railway yards round Rome, San Stefano, Siena, Ancona, Orte, Orvieto, Frascati, Porte Ercole, Foligno, Albinia, Fiume oil refinery, and Pola. . . . On February 14, 24 enemy aircraft were shot down for the loss of one, on February 19, 27 for the loss of three, and on February 23, 36 for the loss of seven." (*Loc. cit.*, No. 5).

The next extract (*loc. cit.*, No. 7) runs :
 "... the air offensive was maintained on enemy centres of communication, particularly on the railways between Rome and Florence. Other targets heavily bombed included Padua, Verona, Leghorn (several times), airfields at Udine, Gorizia, Maniago and other places in the north (on March 18 at

¹ q.v. Section 2 of this chapter.

least 122 aircraft were destroyed in a series of heavy attacks), Fiume docks, railway yards at Rimini and Ancona, docks at Piombino and Porto Ercole, and the U-boat base at Monfalcone." The Allied Mediterranean Air Force did not restrict its activities to Italy and the countries east and north-east of it. Attacks were made on the Antheon viaduct near Toulon (February 4), on shipping off the Riviera on several occasions, on the Marignac factory near Marseilles, and on February 4 on Toulon. The disabled *Dunkerque* was hit in the harbour and set on fire. Escorted heavy U.S. bombers made another daylight attack on Toulon, hitting the docks, shipping and oil stores. About 25 fighters tried to intercept the bombers and two of them were shot down.

The respective losses in air fighting or from A.A. fire of the Allied Air Forces—including French and Italian units,¹ and of the *Luftwaffe* over Italy and the neighbouring Balkan and Central European regions during the quarter were :

| | | <i>Luftwaffe</i> | <i>Allies</i> |
|----------|----|------------------|---------------|
| January | .. | 375 | 107 |
| February | .. | 389 | 152 |
| March | .. | 275 | 177 |
| | | <hr/> 1,039 | <hr/> 436 |

Reference has already been made to the co-operation of the Allied Navies with the forces in the beach-head and elsewhere. Attacks on the enemy's sea communications along the coasts of northern Italy and southern France were frequent.

On January 6 the Admiralty announced that eight ships, including a large tanker encountered in the Gulf of Genoa, had been sunk in the Mediterranean and two damaged by our submarines. Seven commanders of our submarines were mentioned. On January 11 A.H.Q. reported the sinking of three schooners and the shelling of German troops on the Adriatic coast of Italy, one of several such exploits by our destroyers. On January 31 our light craft were active in both Italian seas, sinking two schooners in the Adriatic and a German patrol boat off Spezia, and on February 1 our destroyers bombarded points south of Ancona. When the Cassino operations began Allied warships shelled enemy batteries and dumps in the Formia area. Attempts by hostile craft to raid our shipping off Anzio were intercepted by U.S. patrol torpedo-boats on the night of February 19 and repulsed.

On February 20 the Admiralty reported further successes by our submarines in many seas. Four large supply ships were sunk by torpedo attack in the Mediterranean and several small craft by gunfire. E-boats which approached the Anzio beaches during the night of February 20 were driven off by American patrol craft and one blew up after being hit. A similar attempt was frustrated on February 23-24. In a sharp action announced on March 20 an E-boat and an armed lighter were sunk by U.S. patrol craft, and the same report stated that French light forces had encountered a small enemy convoy in the Central Mediterranean and had sunk three, perhaps all, of its four ships. Another E-boat was sunk, this time by ramming, by a British destroyer on the night of March 24.

¹ Italian squadrons had begun to come into action and did well.

The only reference to sinkings of U-boats in the Mediterranean save in the neighbourhood of Gibraltar (*q.v.* Chapter IV, Section 1) was made by the U.S. Navy Department, which announced on February 3 that one had been sunk by a British destroyer and the U.S. destroyer *Wainwright*.

NOTE.—Operations by our light craft on the Yugoslav coast of the Adriatic are summarized in the following section.

2 : BALKAN AND ÆGEAN OPERATIONS

A. YUGOSLAVIA AND ALBANIA

Fighting continued throughout the quarter between the Yugoslav Liberation forces and the Germans and their Croat allies, occasionally assisted by Bulgarian units. Its importance, however, was not always easy to determine. The Yugoslavs undoubtedly fought with real skill and caused the Germans great trouble. At the same time their habit of describing forces of much less than a brigade in strength as "divisions," and attempts sedulously made in the *communiqués* issued by Marshal Tito's headquarters, and still more in the Free Yugoslav broadcasts from Tiflis, to prove that General Mihailovitch's troops were either doing nothing at all or were actively aiding the Germans left the reader who had opportunities of hearing or reading the versions put about by General Mihailovitch and his supporters thoroughly puzzled. No one had any right to doubt the courage, self-sacrifice and endurance of the Liberation troops; they fought with immense spirit and their leaders often showed great tactical skill, while their commander, Marshal Tito, was a past-master in guerilla warfare, and never obliged his opponents by offering them the chance of a battle in open country or by remaining too long in the towns which he frequently occupied. But the violence of the propaganda directed by their leaders against the Yugoslav Government and General Mihailovitch's forces, and their claim to a monopoly of resistance and of patriotism left doubts on the minds of observers who had some knowledge of the

Balkans. Further doubts and anxieties were aroused by some of their appointments. The appearance among Marshal Tito's Ministers of a person whom many Serbs accused of having served the infamous Croat Government of the collaborationist Pavelitch and of having massacred a large number of Bosnian Serbs was one of these. Another was the appointment to the command of a Yugoslav legion formed for Marshal Tito in the U.S.S.R. from Croat and other Yugoslav prisoners of war of a certain Colonel M. Mesich. This officer had been praised for his "patriotic sacrifices" (i.e. desertion), promoted to the rank of colonel, and awarded the Order of Knight Companion of the Croat Iron Clover and the second class of the German Iron Cross.¹ In January, 1943, he was placed in command of the Croat legion serving the Germans in the army surrounded at Stalingrad, where he was eventually taken prisoner. He was next appointed to command the new Liberationist unit, the formation of which he had suggested. Admiral Darlan "had nothing on" Colonel Mesich.²

On the other hand there was no doubt that the Yugoslav Government in Cairo were no more in touch with the National Liberation movement and little if at all more in control of General Mihailovitch than they had been in London. There were grounds for the suspicion that the old military clique of ultra-nationalist Serb officers were still in the ascendant in the councils of General Mihailovitch and in the circles surrounding the young King. They had been responsible for the patriotic rising against Prince Paul's surrender to the Germans in March, 1941, but they had also been responsible for some of the military violence and downright maladministration that had soured the non-Serb elements between 1919 and 1939.

King Peter returned to London on March 11 accom-

¹ *Hrvatski Narod*, one of the organs of the Pavelitch (pro-German) Party, June 27, 1943. He was also reported to have told Croat wounded sent by air from Stalingrad to tell the Croat people that the Croat legion had fulfilled its duty towards the Poglavnik (meaning the "Leader," i.e. Pavelitch), the Führer, and Croatia.

² Cf. a message from Moscow published by *The Times* on March 14.

panied by his Prime Minister, M. Puritch, and M. Militchevitch, Minister of Interior, and the British Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Mr. Ralph Stevenson, to discuss the Yugoslav situation with the Foreign Office. He also came to marry Princess Alexandra of Greece. The ceremony took place on March 20 at the Yugoslav Embassy in the presence of four monarchs, our King, King George of the Hellenes, King Haakon of Norway, and the Queen of the Netherlands. It was reported that before the end of March he and M. Puritch saw Mr. Eden at the Foreign Office. Meanwhile, the resignations of several Yugoslav diplomatists, who adhered to Marshal Tito's movement on the ground that the Government in Cairo was not representative, must have caused his counsellors much anxiety.

The following summary of the operations in and above Yugoslavia and Albania, and in eastern Adriatic waters, does not pretend to be more than an outline. It may well be incomplete since it is extremely difficult to weigh the relative importance of the events recorded at the time and such Allied or German reports as were available were laconic. It is not easy to form a clear picture of the campaign, but the general impression left is one of a steady effort by the National Liberation forces, regular and irregular, to extend their holding by increasing the area of what might be termed "the danger zone," i.e. the region through which German transport could not pass safely without escort and in which small detachments were liable to be ambushed and sometimes destroyed by sudden concentrations of mobile partisans. Outside these areas, which were all mountainous, the Yugoslav patriots confined themselves to sudden raids on bridges, dumps, railways and the like in which they obtained much support, in spite of savage German reprisals, from the local population. On the whole the Yugoslavs were successful, and they occupied the attention of a large number of German troops who might otherwise have been sent to Italy or Russia.

On January 4 the partisans raided Banyaluka and did much damage there and took prisoners before they were expelled by German armoured

and motorized troops. These then turned southward against Jajce, Marshal Tito's headquarters, and took it apparently on January 15. The Yugoslavs, however, retook it on January 22 and drove a German column which had taken Prozor, in the defile between the head-waters of the Vrbas and the River Narenta, out of that town. They also attacked Tuzla but were eventually driven out by the garrison. In the Lika mountain country in Croatia the 114th and 244th German divisions had numerous encounters with partisans. Three other German divisions, the 1st Alpine, 370th and a motorized division, were identified in the fighting farther south. Trains were derailed near Skoplye (Uskub), and on the Belgrade-Zagreb trunk line.

* During these operations Allied aircraft and warships co-operated with the patriots. Pola was heavily bombed by escorted Fortresses on January 9. Supplies for the German troops in Dalmatia were handled at the port, which was also used as a U-boat base. Heavy bombers raided Skoplye on the following day. The principal ports on the Dalmatian coast were repeatedly raided during January and a merchant ship was blown up in Shibenik (Sebenico) harbour on January 17. H.M. destroyers *Blackmore* and *Ledbury* shelled Durazzo on the Albanian coast, while the *Troubridge* and *Tumult* bombarded Vela Luku and Drvenik. Several enemy small craft were destroyed by air or naval attack. The Mostar airfield was another target.

During February Marshal Tito's forces made a strong thrust towards the pre-war Italian border through Slovenia.

Early in the month they were engaged in south-east Croatia and to the north-west of Serajevo in Bosnia, where they opened up lines of communication between eastern and western Bosnia. Raiding parties also entered Slavonia, where they claimed to have destroyed a battalion of Croat Ustashi and did much damage to the railways. But the main effort was in Slovenia. By February 15 the Liberation forces controlled all southern Slovenia save Novomesto and Kocevye which were blockaded. Later in February it was announced that relieving columns had been repulsed. About February 24 partisan forces crossed the upper waters of the Save and moved in the direction of Gorizia. Smaller bands crossed the Piave between Gorizia and Tolomna and others appeared to have reached the Maribor (Marburg)-Celje (Celli) line, north-east of Lyublyana (Laibach), the capital of Slovenia. Fighting was also reported south and north-west of Serayevo.

The Germans were compelled by this advance to bring up reinforcements from Austria and the north Italian garrisons, and they had to remove a number of the new settlers whom they had "planted" in northern Slovenia in the place of expelled Slovenes. On February 27 they were attacking in the Gorizia area and also in Styria, where parties of Yugoslavs had slipped across the pre-war border and were engaging the local Austrian levies. For the next fortnight the Yugoslavs, who had infiltrated into northern Slovenia and the Isonzo Valley, gave them a great deal of trouble, and Marshal Tito's Headquarters claimed that some 500 Germans and Fascist Italian troops were killed in a great number of minor encounters. Eventually the raiders were driven back over the border, but under cover of this diversion they had done much damage to the enemy's communications in northern Slovenia and extended the danger area in several parts of that province. They had also been active near Trebinje. Later in March

there was less news from the Yugoslav fronts and it would seem that the enemy now adopted new methods, giving his transport columns stronger escorts of armoured cars and motorized troops and strengthening the flank guards of his columns in the mountains, with the result that the operations of the Liberation forces became more expensive. None the less, in spite of a distressing lack of surgical material, drugs, and anaesthetics for their severely wounded, who were reported to have numbered about 10,000 at the end of the quarter, the patriots, men and women alike, showed no signs of war-weariness or depression, but continued to harass the enemy in every possible manner.

During these two months the Allies gave Marshal Tito increasing support by air and sea. The R.A.F. raided Maribor on the night of February 1. Several schooners were sunk off the Dalmatian coast by our light coastal forces and prisoners, including Germans, were taken. On the night of February 4 the islands of Hvar and Korcula were shelled by British destroyers. The latter island was again shelled by H.M. destroyers *Troubridge* and *Termagant* on February 14. On February 22, when American heavy bombers from Italy joined in the first co-ordinated raid on Germany from England and Italy, another force of Fortresses bombed Zagreb airfield, while Liberators attacked Zara. Pola and Zara were raided by heavies on February 25. Attacks on shipping off the Dalmatian coast were recorded almost daily in February.

On March 10 the German official news agency reported the occupation of the island of Lissa, 20 miles south-west of Shplit (Spalato) by an Anglo-American commando force 1,500 strong. Korcula Island was again shelled by destroyers on the night of March 8. They suffered no damage, although the fire of the coastal batteries was accurate enough.

On March 19 the railway yards at Knin and Metkovic were heavily bombed and on March 30, while a powerful force of big American bombers raided Sofia, a detachment of Fortresses bombed the Imorski airfield, 14 miles south of Makarska in Yugoslavia. An Admiralty report issued on April 3, but probably referring to naval events of the past week, said that "during recent operations" light forces of the French Navy had encountered and destroyed a convoy of enemy vessels and its escort without suffering damage or casualties.

News from Albania was extremely meagre during this period, but it was known that in spite of German violence several Albanian bands were fighting the invaders. On the other hand, some elements were helping the Germans, as the following extract from an announcement, issued at Cairo on February 15, showed :

After referring to the presence of an Allied mission under Brigadier E. F. Davies in Albania the official statement went on : "In accordance with British policy the mission will continue to assist all Albanians who are fighting or who are ready to fight the Germans." It explained that early in January the partisan band with which Brigadier Davies and his staff were living was attacked by Germans north-east of Tirana. The brigadier with his staff and a small number of partisans retired north-eastwards. A few days later "a surprise attack was made by Albanians who were co-operating with the Germans against partisans. During the action, several

partisans were killed and Brigadier Davies was severely wounded. He was later taken to hospital at Tirana in a serious condition."

"Albanian resistance still continues, especially in the south, in spite of brutal German reprisals. Only recently some thousand Germans descended upon the smiling valley of Gjinokaster, burned the houses of those known as outstanding patriots and pillaged the remainder of everything they could carry away."

On March 7 Moscow announced that a Russian military mission under Lieutenant-General Kornev had arrived in Yugoslavia and established contact with Marshal Tito's forces. Captain Randolph Churchill, M.P., was stated on February 27 to have arrived in Yugoslavia "some weeks ago."

Little news came from General Mihailovitch's camp. He was said to be harassing the Germans by the promotion of sabotage, but there was no news of serious fighting between his forces and the Germans, with whom some of his unruly lieutenants were alleged to have made private arrangements. His chief activities were political. On February 14 the "Democratic Yugoslavia News Agency" attached to his Headquarters announced that a national congress had been held in the mountains on January 26-28, attended by 273 representatives of the "Ravna Gor" movement, who were the first to rally patriots to resist the Germans under the general's leadership.

The Congress, said the announcement, was attended by representatives of all political parties who had enjoyed the public confidence in the past and of all non-political, cultural, social, athletic and other organizations. The president of the Congress was Dr. Topalovitch, leader of the Social-Democratic Party. General Mihailovitch attended as representative of the Government. He expressed the loyalty of the Army to King Peter and to the constitutional and legal order, and repudiated all reports that he had demanded collective reprisals for the crimes of individuals, and that he aspired to be a dictator. The Congress decided to form a coalition of all parties and organizations represented there, to be called the Yugoslav National Democratic Union, for the purpose of fighting the enemy armies of occupation and bringing into effect the democratic reforms to be made after the war. The Congress also appealed to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia to stop "its destructive action of disruption both in the military and in the political field," and to submit to the national discipline in the war of liberation.¹

In February many Serbs who favoured General Mihailovitch's movement or the rival organization were arrested in Belgrade by the Germans. They included M. Stankovitch, a former Regent, M. Uzunovitch, a former Prime Minister, and several ex-Ministers.

¹ *B.I.N.*, xxi, No. 4.

B. GREECE, THE AEGEAN AND BULGARIA

The internecine strife between the two chief Greek partisan organizations, E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S., to which reference was made in Chapter II, Section 2 of *The Seventeenth Quarter*, continued to benefit the Germans and to weaken the national resistance during the first half of the quarter. On January 14, indeed, reports reached Cairo that, owing to the exhaustion of the people, the inclement weather in the mountains, and the strife between the two chief guerillero forces, resistance had almost ceased. This was an exaggeration, but there can be no doubt that the edge of the national warfare against the German and Bulgarian invaders was blunted, and that the quarrel between the E.A.M. (National Liberation Front), of which E.L.A.S. was the military wing, and the E.D.E.S. was increasing the sufferings of the peasantry. Some of the professedly Communist leaders of the E.L.A.S. bands were violent, ambitious and brutal men who treated those of their fellow-countrymen who had joined rival organizations or had been slow in complying with requisition orders or financial levies¹ as savagely as the Germans had done. An example was made of one of these leaders indeed by his political chiefs. This was the Communist Partsalides, who took and defiled the name of "Odysseus," and, passing as a member of the E.A.M., terrorized the country near the Turkish border in the Ebros (Maritza) region.

In the end his cruelties and depredations became so scandalous that the E.A.M. sent a representative to the scene of his activities. He found that public complaints were fully justified. "Odysseus" was dismissed, arrested and tried by a court martial. The well-informed correspondent of *The Times* at Ankara telegraphed (*loc. cit.* March 20): "It is now disclosed that the court martial found Odysseus guilty of various acts of terrorism, including the murder of 400 persons, and condemned him to death, and that the sentence was carried out on February 27." The condemnation of this ruffian had a good effect, but it came late. Partsalides was not the only leader of partisans to give Communism an atrociously bad name in many Greek villages or to make the unfortunate peasants wonder whether their

¹ Many of them had already had to satisfy the Germans, and compliance with the demands of the partisans threatened to leave them without stock or crop.

liberators were any better than the "Iron-heads," as they nicknamed the Germans.

Great efforts were made by the British military missions in Greece and by the British High Command in the Eastern Mediterranean to bring about an understanding between the rival forces of "Andartes," and on February 10 it was announced in Cairo that fighting between the E.L.A.S. and the bands under Colonel Zervas (leader of the E.D.E.S.) had ceased. The announcement continued:

"The result has been achieved after long negotiations through the mediation of the Greek Government and G.H.Q., Middle East, who will do everything possible to bring the strife to an end, reconcile all the . . . bands, and co-ordinate their efforts against the Germans. Now that both Colonel Zervas and the E.L.A.S. have agreed to cease hostilities there can be no excuse for any recurrence."

A week later the Correspondent of *The Times* at Ankara (*loc. cit.* February 18) said that the agreement between the two leading partisan organizations was purely military. It defined their respective zones of action, thus diminishing the likelihood of collisions between them, but it did not deal with the political questions which divided them. There had been a lull in political warfare.

"The letter addressed by the King of the Hellenes to . . . his Prime Minister has been interpreted as meaning that the King might consent to postpone his return to Greece until after a plebiscite has been held to determine the definite form of regime desired by the Greek people. This gesture by the King has produced an excellent effect in Greece and has cleared the atmosphere. . . ." The Correspondent added that the appeal of M. Tsouderos to all patriots to put aside their quarrels was likely now to be more effective and he spoke highly of the action of politicians in Greece, several of whom had worked for a reconciliation.¹

An official statement issued in Cairo on March 17 gave more details of the agreement. While the civil war was raging between the two factions, M. Tsouderos, the Greek Prime Minister, with British, American and Russian support made several appeals for reconciliation, but the agreement was brought about by the brilliant work of a senior British liaison officer, who persuaded both sides to agree to an armistice. A conference then took place in the mountains, but though 14 meetings were held agreement could not be reached at all points. E.A.M. representatives wished to raise political issues, but the other delegates only had military terms of reference. E.A.M. nevertheless proposed that a govern-

¹ Cf. *The Seventeenth Quarter*, pp. 61, 62.

mental committee should be formed to assume power in Greece, while negotiating a political agreement with the Government in Cairo, an idea which did not greatly commend itself to M. Tsouderos. Both sides agreed to return political prisoners and hostages and to fight the Germans "either separately or, after mutual agreement, jointly."

It was a precarious truce, although it did something to revive resistance in Greece, but the situation of the Greek Government in Egypt was also precarious. The E.A.M. group had placed its agents to sow disaffection in the Greek Army in the Middle East and in the Greek Navy, and M. Tsouderos was accused in many quarters of having been altogether too weak in dealing with previous cases of insubordination¹ which had begun to make the Hellenic Navy an uncertain factor.

On March 31, after meetings and agitations in the Greek forces, a small group of men representing all three services called on the Prime Minister and threateningly demanded a broadening of the Greek Government by the inclusion of representatives of the E.A.M. The tragic sequel to this intrusion of the armed forces into politics will be told in the next volume of this series.

There had been no fighting to speak of in Greece during January, but the Germans continued to burn villages, to shoot hostages, sometimes at the rate of 100 for every officer killed, and to levy crippling requisitions. According to reports reaching Egypt from Turkey they had destroyed some 1,600 villages by mid-January. In February resistance revived, and on February 22 a force of Andartes (partisans), with British officers, attacked a German troop train while it passed through a gorge of the River Pinios by night. A snowstorm aided the attack; a mine exploded and sent the engine, an armoured truck and ten carriages crashing into the river and the men defending the remaining armoured coach were

¹ Instead of dealing firmly with them he had put Admiral Sakellariou, an excellent commanding officer, on the retired list and had deprived his able successor, Admiral Kawwadias, of his command, thus weakening the Greek Navy at a critical moment. His action on these occasions during 1943 had encouraged the "politicians"—of whom there were too many in the Greek armed forces—to hope to blackmail the Government still further.

attacked with "sticky bombs" by a British officer and two men and succumbed. The Germans lost a general and about 400 men killed or drowned with many wounded. The Greeks had three casualties.

Late in February Bulgarian troops took the place of the German garrisons in the provinces of Edessa, Florina and Kastoria in northern Greece, in spite of protests made locally and even by the quisling government of John Rhallys. They promptly began to oppress the population, to shoot or deport its leaders and to pillage all and sundry. It had been estimated earlier in February that of the 700,000 Greeks of Bulgarian-occupied Macedonia and Thrace, 150,000 had been deported for forced labour, 25,000 had been killed, and 150,000 had fled to other parts of Greece. It is hardly necessary to add that in spite of Allied aid the food situation in Greece was bad. Details of the amounts of food, medicines and vitamin preparations sent to Greece by Great Britain, Canada, the U.S.A. and other countries since October, 1941, were given by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Economic Warfare on February 8, and a joint statement was issued by the British and American Governments on March 16. This last showed a monthly allocation of about 20,000 tons of food-stuffs.

The reader will turn, perhaps with relief, from this distressing picture of German savagery and of what Mr. Churchill in his speech of February 22 called "the diseases of defeat" among Greeks, to an account of the operations by air and sea against the enemy in the Aegean and the air raids directed against Bulgaria. It is only possible here to give a brief chronicle of the principal attacks carried out from Middle Eastern bases during the quarter. There were many minor operations which cannot be enumerated in the compass of this Section, for few fine days passed without encounters with the enemy in this region, and the Allied Air Force in the Middle East was one and not the least important of the agencies by which contact was maintained with the Greek resistance movement.

The first air attack of the year on Bulgaria was directed against the railway yards at Dubnitsa, south of Sofia, by a small force of escorted heavy bombers on January 4. On the night of January 5 heavy R.A.F. bombers attacked Rhodes harbour with success from the Middle East, and the *communiqué* announcing the operation added that in spite of bad weather in the Aegean aircraft of the R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. had sunk a number of sailing vessels attempting to supply the occupied islands. On the night of January 9-10 the defences at Salamis and Eleusis airfield near Athens were heavily bombed from the Middle East, while bombers from North Africa raided the Piræus in strength on the night of January 11.

The next attack on Sofia was made on January 10, by a heavy force of Flying Fortresses which attacked about noon. Bombing through cloud, the attackers, no doubt inadvertently, did great damage to residential quarters and were said to have made over 3,000 victims. The National Bank, the Ministry of Interior, the Soviet and Hungarian Legations and the Central Post Office were hit. The public services were temporarily disrupted; there was a great shortage of food and water; parties of looters gave trouble and were severely dealt with. The Government ordered all persons unconnected with the public services to leave Sofia and the number affected by the order was estimated at 200,000. They were dispersed among the provincial towns.

On January 24 R.A.F. Headquarters, Middle East, reported another heavy attack on the Piræus harbour on the night of January 23 and said that in spite of bad weather three sailing ships had been sunk and others damaged by our aircraft in Aegean waters. Two more were sunk in a daylight attack on January 26 and a score were damaged. Six German aircraft, three Ju52 transport machines and three Arado 196s which were escorting them, were caught by British Beaufighters on January 27 and were all destroyed. On January 30 small craft were attacked successfully off Melos and Siphnos; and Stampalia harbour was raided by daylight on the last day of the month.

On January 12 it was announced that Air Marshal Sir Keith Park, Air Officer Commanding, Malta, had been appointed A.O.C.-in-C., Middle East, to succeed Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas on that officer's appointment to take over Coastal Command. Sir Keith Park had done admirable work at Malta in 1942 and 1943.

On February 4 R.A.F. Headquarters, Middle East, reported raids on Suda Bay in Crete and successful attacks on ships off Patmos and near Paros, where four sailing ships were left in a wrecked condition. During the next three weeks bad weather did not altogether prevent our aircraft from harassing enemy small ships endeavouring to revictual the island garrisons, and on February 22 many hits were scored on a large, strongly escorted merchantman off Candia. Leros was heavily raided by U.S. Marauders on February 24 and there was a sharp action also over Leros between South African light bombers and enemy aircraft on February 25.

Successful attacks on enemy transport aircraft by intruding Middle Eastern Beaufighters were recorded on March 6. On that day Marauders bound for Santorin Island were attacked by 12 German fighters which "harassed them all the way to the target." Four German machines and as many Marauders were shot down. Many other harassing operations were carried out against enemy shipping during the month and several more transport aircraft were destroyed.

The first attack on Sofia from Italy since January 10 was made by R.A.F. Wellingtons which raided the railway yards before dawn on March 16. The Bulgarian capital was attacked by R.A.F. medium bombers on the night of March 29 and on March 30 large forces of escorted heavy American bombers repeated the attack, leaving great fires and much devastation. They shot down eight German or Bulgarian machines which attacked them. The railway junction at Plovdiv (Philippopolis) was also raided from Italy in March.

Axis and Allied air losses in the Eastern Mediterranean during the quarter were :

| | <i>Luftwaffe</i> ¹ | <i>R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F.</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| January .. | 7 | 9 |
| February ... | 20 | 26 |
| March .. | 12 | 11 |
| | — | — |
| | 39 | 46 |
| | — | — |

3 : THE ARAB LANDS

The conversations on the subject of Arab unity initiated by the Egyptian Premier, Nahas Pasha, continued during the quarter. A Lebanese delegation consisting of Riad es-Sulh Beg (Prime Minister), Selim Takla Beg (Foreign Minister), and Musa Mubarak Beg (the Lebanese President's *Chef de Cabinet*), visited Cairo in February to thank King Farouk for his support during the recent crisis and to discuss Arab unity and co-operation. The conversations were said to have been highly successful. Brief talks between Nahas Pasha and a Yemenite delegate followed. Then arose the question of the representation of Palestine. The growth of Arab Nationalist feeling and the disturbances in Palestine to which reference is made later in this section gave this issue an importance which it might not have had before the unhappy experiment in appeasement in Palestine in 1936-38. The pressure of the Jews of Palestine for the rescission of the White Paper of 1939 had strong support from great numbers of Jews in the English-speaking world and the Palestinian Arabs felt that closer relations with their Arab neighbours would offer them some hope of obtaining a larger measure of self-government with some accommodation to Jewish needs. But as the Correspondent of *The Times* in Jerusalem pointed out :

"No Arab leader now in Palestine . . . commands the support of all parties, and those who lead the party organizations are preoccupied with

¹ Some Bulgarian machines may be included among these.

sectional jealousies . . . rather than with major issues." To meet this difficulty it was suggested that since it was impossible to summon an all-Palestine Arab Congress to elect a delegation the delegates to Cairo should be drawn from the surviving members of the Higher Arab Committee which was banned in 1937 or from those who formed the delegation to London in 1939. The "Palestinian Arab Party," really representing the vested interests of the Husseini clan, refused to nominate delegates to Cairo unless Jamal Husseini, the Mufti's lieutenant, now in detention in Rhodesia, were released and headed the delegation. The British Government did not show "any signs of agreement with this idea."¹ Nury Pasha es-Said, Prime Minister of Iraq, had tried to arrange a meeting with the party leaders and persuade the Husseinis to agree to some other leader of the proposed delegation, but he failed."¹

Meanwhile, Jewish agitation against the White Paper had met with a good deal of support in the United States. It had been actively pressed ; and it had been aided by some prominent Americans, of whom some were suspected of angling for Jewish votes or of indulging in some anti-British propaganda in preparation for the coming presidential election. Much anxiety was caused in the Arabic-speaking countries by a resolution submitted to the Senate by Senator Wagner. Its acceptance by that House would have put the Senate on record as opposing the British White Paper which limited Jewish immigration until March 31, 1944,² and as supporting continued Jewish immigration. It provoked protests addressed to the State Department by the Egyptian, Iraqi, Syrian and Lebanese Governments. On March 5 Senator Nye announced that General Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, had urged the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate to postpone action on the Wagner resolution. His objections were given to the committee at a secret session. It was understood that they were military. It was announced at the same time that the Iraqi Government had unwisely pressed for the withdrawal of the Wagner

¹ This was hardly surprising. Jamal Husseini, after being interned in connection with the Palestinian rising of 1936-39, was one of the close associates of his kinsman, the Mufti of Jerusalem, in his activities before the anti-British rising in Iraq (*q.v.* *The Sixth Quarter*, p. 96 ; *The Seventh Quarter*, p. 96 ; and *The Eighth Quarter*, p. 126). He was mercifully treated in being sent to Rhodesia instead of being court-martialled.

² *The Times*, February 11.

³ After that date the control of Jewish immigration was to have been vested in an autonomous Government of Palestine which would almost necessarily have represented the Arab majority.



GENERAL BRADLEY

resolution and provoked the retort from its mover that Congress was accustomed to settle its affairs without interference by officials of other countries; but that the presidents of both Houses of the Iraqi Parliament had reiterated the demand in most emphatic terms. Their message, the Correspondent of *The Times* at Washington reported,

claimed that the Arabs of Palestine were muzzled, but the Arabs of Iraq would not be silent, and it argued that the American desire that Palestine should ultimately become a free Jewish State meant first the elimination of 1,000,000 Arabs from Palestine; secondly, the consequent hostility of every Arab of Asia and Africa to the United States; and thirdly, the handing over of the Holy Places of Moslems and Christians to the Jews.

It declared that few Jews would go to Palestine could they find asylum in the United States, and it added that the authors of the claim could not believe that the responsible bodies over which Mr. Henry Wallace, President of the Senate, and Mr. Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives, presided,¹ seriously contemplated such a dangerous policy which was being used by Nazi propagandists to set the Arabs against the Jews and also against the whole democratic world. (*The Times*, Washington message, published March 6.)

On March 7 it was officially announced that Nahas Pasha had protested to General Smuts concerning his declaration in favour of a Jewish National Home in a message wishing success to an appeal for a United Palestine launched by the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. Further anxiety was aroused in the Arab world when it was announced from Washington that Rabbi Stephen Wise and Dr. Abba Silver, ex-Chairmen of the Zionist Emergency Council in the U.S.A., had held a long conference with President Roosevelt, after which they had given out that the President had authorized them to say that

"the American Government has never given its approval to the White Paper of 1939," that the President "is happy that the doors of Palestine are to-day open to Jewish refugees," and that "when future decisions are reached full justice will be done to those who seek a Jewish national home."

The situation promised to be still further complicated by two fresh developments. On March 11 Nahas Pasha, who had obviously come to the conclusion that Arab Unity was a remunerative political horse to run, stated that while no invitations had been sent to Morocco,

¹ A similar resolution to Senator Wagner's had been laid before the House of Representatives.

Tunisia and other North African countries to take part in the Cairo conversations,

"that does not mean that we are neglecting to work for our Arab brothers in Morocco. In the interest of the country itself we demand that it should be left to the Government to take the measures it judges necessary. The principles of the Atlantic Charter to which Egypt adheres will aid us in our task." What, if anything, Nahas Pasha proposed to do for the Moors was not shown by this sibylline statement. The French took notice of it, but said nothing officially. Unofficially they hinted that they held a card in Morocco which would make an "Arab movement" there look foolish, should it be necessary to play it.

More immediately important was the disclosure made on February 6 by the American Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Harold Ickes, acting as president of the Petroleum Reserves Corporation, that the United States Government would construct an oil pipe line from the Persian Gulf refineries to the Mediterranean at a cost of between \$130,000,000 and \$165,000,000. His announcement marked the end of long negotiations between the Petroleum Reserve Corporation and the big American oil companies having interests in the Persian Gulf area. Under an agreement reached between the U.S. Government on the one hand and the Arabian American Oil Coy. (owned by Standard Oil of California, and the Texas Oil Coy.) and the Gulf Exploitation Coy. (owned by the Gulf Oil Corporation) on the other, the U.S. Government had undertaken to construct the pipe-line.

Mr. Ickes said that the programme would help to assure an adequate supply of petroleum for the military and naval needs of the United States, in view of the obligations which that country must assume for the maintenance of collective security in the post-war world. The scheme was expected to provide a reserve of 1,000,000,000 barrels of oil for American military and naval forces. The terms of the agreement guaranteed the repayment to the Government of their investment and costs within 25 years.

The agreement, however, was conditional upon the parties concerned obtaining the consent of the rulers of Saudi Arabia and of British protected Koweit. Some American and British observers, who also realized that other Arab Governments might be involved if the pipe-line were carried to the Mediterranean, wondered whether the pro-Zionist campaign in America would assist the State Department to obtain the consent of any Arab Governments to the scheme.

Unluckily for the Jews in Palestine their extremists chose this time to open a campaign of bombing, shooting and laying infernal machines in order to bring pressure on the British Government to rescind the White Paper of 1939. Of the small minority concerned in this movement, a few belonged to "The Stern Gang," a body which had professed an extreme patriotism and practised blackmail and violent crime in 1942. More were members of a force which called itself *Irgun zvi le-umi*, i.e. the

army of the people, and had been engaged in reprisals against the Arab terrorists in 1938-39. In a letter addressed to the Hebrew Press after the bombing of the Immigration Department's offices at Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel-Aviv on February 12 the leaders of this body accepted responsibility for these misdeeds.

Among the outrages committed in February and March by these desperadoes, were bomb-throwings, attacks on Government buildings, attempts to intimidate persons in official employment, and murders of British and Jewish policemen. Six members of the British Palestine Police were killed on the night of March 23, when the C.I.D. offices at Haifa were wrecked and bombing and shooting outrages took place at Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. Several gunmen were killed in these attacks. A curfew was proclaimed in the three aforesaid cities and the Government reintroduced the death penalty for certain crimes to be tried by military courts, including the carrying of arms or bombs. These outrages were vigorously denounced by the General Council of Palestine Jews, the Council of the General Federation of Labour and other Jewish public bodies.

In these circumstances the British Government decided to "mark time" before carrying out the provisions of the White Paper. That document had proposed that no more Jewish immigrants should be admitted to Palestine after March 31, 1944, save by Arab consent to be expressed through an elected body representing the inhabitants of Palestine of whom the Arabs formed the majority. But the war and the state of affairs in Palestine forbade the Government to indulge in constitution-making there at a time when the Jewish and Arab communities were abnormally excited by developments in the United States and by the Arab Unity movement. Moreover, the Jews had not yet attained their quota, owing to the difficulties which beset the unhappy people who tried to escape from Hitler's Europe. They had still the right to some 30,000 immigrants. It would have been inhuman and unjust to forbid the exercise of that right.

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CHAPTER III

THE GERMAN-SOVIET WAR

*By Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. de Watteville, C.B.E., M.A.
(Oxon.), p.s.c.*

ON New Year's Day, 1944, as the result of its renewed forward movement, the Russian First Ukrainian Army, had regained, all within the space of seven days, the ground it had lost to von Manstein's counter-attacks after these had persisted over a period of no less than five weeks. So great a contrast in the results achieved seems to require some explanation, since it could only arise out of a growing disparity between German and Russian fighting power, even when every allowance has been made for the exhaustion of the Germans after their prolonged and furious assaults. Moreover, by examining this matter a little more closely we may obtain a clearer insight into the probable future course of this often inscrutable struggle.

The disparity between the two belligerents can be accounted for chiefly by three causes : namely the numbers, armament and strategic distribution of the opposing forces. To treat of the matter of numbers first, in this connection let us turn to an exceptionally well-informed article of the Zurich *Weltwoche* for December 3, 1943.

"At the zenith of Germany's military effort, that is at the moment when her armies were approaching Stalingrad, while in North Africa they were fighting on Egyptian soil, the German troops then under arms belonging to all categories and to all services numbered close on 16,500,000 men. Since then the German mobilization had been driven much further. More annual contingents had been called up ; more heavy demands for manpower made upon industry. To-day nearly every German male between the ages of 17 and 53 years is in uniform, namely all men born between 1890 and 1926. The class of 1898 (men of 46) is still fighting with the first-line troops ; older men are employed on the lines of communication services. The sixteen-year-olds, of the class of 1927, were due for muster in January (1944) ; but since a good fifth part of these youngsters, already in the

Labour Corps and other like formations, had volunteered and left for service in the armed forces, the Army will not secure the full benefit from this source of reinforcement."

But German casualties have continued to outstrip the intake of recruits—however carefully the regulations may have been enforced—so far that according to the best and most reliable data and estimates the total strength of the German Army now falls just short of 10,000,000 men; a figure which implies a loss of well over one-third of its highest total in the space of 15 months. It is true that Germany still possesses the same total number of divisions as in 1942. But during the past two years the strength of the German division has been continually shrinking until to-day a normal divisional strength of 15,000 men is only to be found as an exception. The majority of divisions comprise under 13,000 men, whilst in occupied countries many are far weaker. In France, for example, in early 1943 a division of the occupying troops required 55 trains for its transport: to-day such a movement is carried out by 40 trains of similar composition.

Likewise with the armoured divisions. To-day (December, 1943) the existence can be established of between 30 and 35 such divisions, of which over 20 are stationed on the Eastern Front. But it should be remembered that a German armoured division in the past could reckon upon one reinforcing and one reserve division apiece. Now out of this total the last-named, that is the reserve divisions, have all recently disappeared without leaving a trace. The average divisional establishment of 360 tanks is now seldom to be found. During von Manstein's counter-attacks at Zhitomir it was conclusively shown that numerous German armoured divisions could muster scarcely half their former total of tanks.¹

If the question of material and armament be considered the picture is not very different in tone. From Stockholm various neutral reports make it clear that German industry is suffering seriously from the combination of unsatisfactory labour conditions, the evacuation and dislocation of industry, as well as from actual bombing damage.

Let us quote the Swiss journal once more.

"From the normally silent German Press the debit side of the account can be traced. Ever more numerous are growing the cases where factories that have been spared destruction by aerial attack may have to suspend work for days because certain subsidiary workshops manufacturing special components have been struck. The very organization of industry seems to have suffered. Orders are followed by cancellations. In place of the thorough detailed planning that was customary in Germany there reigns a hitherto unfamiliar uncertainty in high places. The bombardments, it is whispered, have destroyed records and files. Industries that have been 'evacuated' may be ordered to carry out yet a second or even a third such move because their previous location may be no longer considered to be safe against aerial attack. Many novelties and improvements devised by the scientist and the inventor now only reach the troops after long delay

¹In a recent *Sunday Times* Alexander Werth estimated the average strength of a German division fighting in South Russia at 7,000.

if only because of transport difficulties. Thus in the matter of the provision of winter equipment for the season 1943-44 long delays have become perceptible."¹

Nevertheless, these questions of numerical strengths and industrial output are not quite so straightforward as might appear at first sight ; neither have they proved to be a constant factor in the problem. In 1941 Germany had attacked Russia with a superb army, magnificently equipped. It is true that Germany could draw upon a population of only 80,000,000 as opposed to the Russian total of approximately 160,000,000. But relying on her unrivalled organizing skill and greater capacity for the production of munitions of war, Germany had believed that any apparent disparity in numbers was assuredly neither real nor effective. It is, in fact, incontestable that in 1941 the sum of the material factors would have inclined the balance strongly to the German side. By the end of 1941 the advantage was in one respect still more pronounced, since by that time Germany could reckon on the industrial output of allied, satellite, occupied and neutral countries which offered a willing or unwilling recruiting ground for industry that was based on a population of not far short of 500,000,000. Russia had by that time lost so much territory that her own recruiting ground had shrunk to a population of less than 120,000,000. That is to say, Russia stood at a disadvantage of four to one in the matter of the respective sources of total manpower.

From that dilemma she had been saved first by her own national qualities of indomitable tenacity and patience ; secondly, by the winter climate of 1941-42 ; thirdly, by the material assistance of the Allies, an assistance that had been powerfully reinforced by the Anglo-American aerial onslaught on Germany during 1943-44 ; and last but not least by the remarkable shift of her industrial strength far away to the east.

Meanwhile German casualties had been mounting up in a fashion hitherto undreamed, so in 1943 Germany tried to make a supreme effort to bring into play her

¹ *Die Weltwoche*, loc. cit.

remaining man-power and material reserves for a great last offensive. But this full mobilization of her last resources in men during 1943 had been neutralized, and more than neutralized, by the sanguinary yet fruitless struggle at Kursk-Byelgorod. The output of her factories had been still further reduced by the Anglo-American aerial campaign.

Above all, however, the German Army had by the end of 1943 lost much of the advantage it had enjoyed in the sphere of tactics. The immense superiority that the Germans had enjoyed in 1941, and again in 1942, had gradually been whittled down by the increasing tactical skill of the Russians. In the last four *Quarters* attention has repeatedly been drawn to the manner in which the original tactics of the German *Blitzkrieg* had been countered by new Russian methods and weapons. There is therefore no need to dwell upon this aspect of the situation. But as the qualitative difference between the two belligerents grew less, so did the importance of numbers, that is, the quantitative difference, assume a new place in their respective strategy. Here the Russians since early in 1943 began to hold an unquestioned advantage; and, for a variety of reasons already touched upon, that same advantage was growing all the time. Consequently they were enabled gradually to venture on a disposal of their forces and to indulge in an offensive strategy which might have been foolhardy, if not even suicidal, in any former stage of the war.

On the other hand, there existed very serious potential handicaps to any further Russian action, sufficient indeed to neutralize many of the advantages which now appeared to weigh so heavily in their favour. As had happened in the spring of 1943, so it might come to pass once more. In the February of the past year the German forces in the basin of the River Donetz had been forced back on to better and virtually undamaged communications, whilst the Russians were left floundering in the mud with inadequate or broken railways and damaged roads. The result was the Russian failure to cut off the German forces in that region, and the eventual loss of Kharkov.

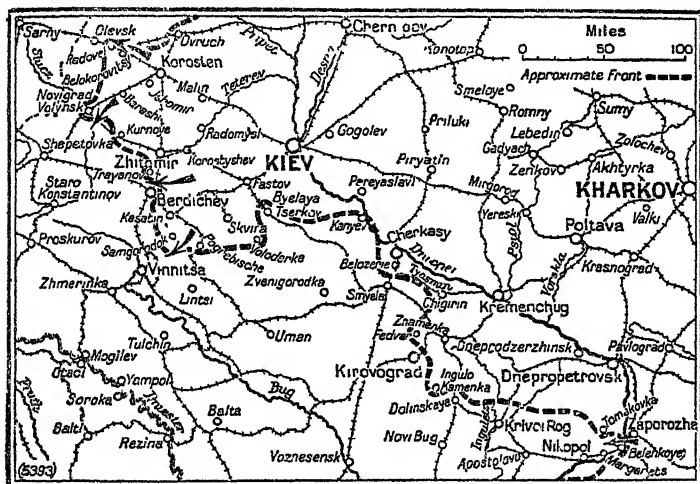
Similarly, now in January, 1944, as the Germans were being driven back westwards so they began falling back towards the better Central European railway system. Any change from the wider and higher Russian railway gauges to Central European standards must prove a grave obstacle to Russian progress. The Germans were approaching their own country and might shortly be deriving every possible advantage to be gained from a more central position, shorter haulage distances, and undamaged railways or roads. In addition the time was drawing near when they must contract their front and so at last enjoy a better chance of acquiring and using some reserve of armed force. The Russians were standing in very much the opposite position.

Accordingly, before making any determined and direct thrust towards Germany itself the Russian High Command set their southern armies the task of liquidating the German forces remaining in the Ukraine. In their own words :

"The Supreme Command in Moscow has concluded that the problem which has to be solved within the next week, or even days, is not to be the measure of General Vatutin's penetration westwards into the Ukraine, nor whether he will cross the Bug or the Dniester, and so penetrate into Besarabia. The true problem is this : is von Manstein's Group of Armies in the Ukraine, now 600,000 or 700,000 strong, to be destroyed ; or are the Germans to be allowed—and then to what degree—to extricate themselves out of the western Ukraine ? The strategic possibilities which may lie before General Vatutin will stand out clearly as soon as a solution to the present problem has been afforded by forthcoming events."

The task now set before the Russian Armies was no other than the destruction of the large German forces remaining within the great bend to the south of the Dnieper. To this end the three Ukrainian Armies of Vatutin, Konev and Malinovsky were set in motion simultaneously from the north-west, north, north-east and east, in order to bring about a gigantic encirclement of the German forces. The pace of the whole movement was to be set by the left wheel of Vatutin's First Army, this being the strongest army of the three. It was ordered to close in on the Germans from the north-west, whilst the two remaining Russian armies were to keep in step

with Vatutin to the eastwards of him. To Vatutin's army, in view of its task, had been allotted the bulk of the armoured units. With this weight of armament and with his greater numbers Vatutin could afford to advance on a surprisingly broad front in contrast to his previous movement on Zhitomir, which had been planned as a deep, rapid thrust designed to cut the important north-south railway. Fully satisfied that the Russian hold on the area of the Pripet marshes was now effective,



THE KIEV SALIENT, JANUARY 4, 1944

Vatutin could venture to act far more boldly and neglect all possible danger to his right flank. Nevertheless, in order to make doubly certain of this flank, he decided to despatch the bulk of his Cossack cavalry and other horsed troops in a more westerly direction towards Lvov. In addition a further move had been ordered towards Mozyr, on the north side of the marshes, also by cavalry divisions reinforced with heavy arms of attack.

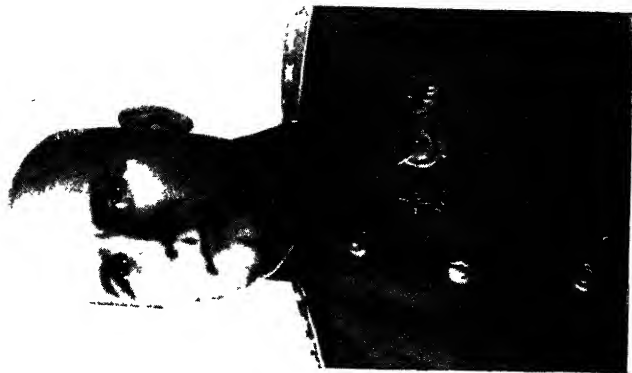
The actual course of events was the following. Vatutin's First Army swung gradually south and south-west, aiming at the main railway trunk line that runs from Warsaw to

Odessa : its chief and ultimate goal was the all-important junction of Zhmerinka. In the first stages of this advance the secondary rail junction of Byelaya Tserkov was captured on January 4 after four days' fighting : while a similar centre, Berdichev, fell on the 5th after a five days' struggle. Further east Kirovograd was finally wrested from the Germans on the 8th. Here the fighting was severe. Eight German divisions were totally defeated while the breach in the German defence line widened to 75 miles. In spite of this blow the Germans still clung to Kanev, farther east, on the River Dnieper itself ; they imagined this position to be not too hazardous since they still held the "mouth" of this possible "sack" at Smyela and Uman. However, the German hold on Smyela was shortly rendered somewhat more insecure when the Russians on January 10 reached Yarovota, thus leaving the Germans no more than a single railway line which ran due south from Smyela.

The loss of Kirovograd, however, proved a far more serious threat to the Germans who then fought ferociously to save the area to the south of the town. Five whole German divisions, after refusing to surrender, were utterly routed, leaving 15,000 dead at their last centre of resistance. This setback, combined with Russian pressure farther west, soon compelled the Germans to expedite the evacuation of the Bend. Consequently, with a view to gaining more time for this operation, they began counter-attacking violently in the vicinity of the railway town of Vinnitsa, that is farther to the westwards, so as to save Zhmerinka. Cost what it may, they must save that crucial railway junction.

In the meantime the Russian mounted troops had been making better headway due westwards, and were soon several miles to the far side of the Polish frontier. They were then approaching Sarny. This town they entered on January 11, on the same day that they reached the Polish R. Bug. By the 17th they were well to the west of the railway at Stepan beyond Sarny.

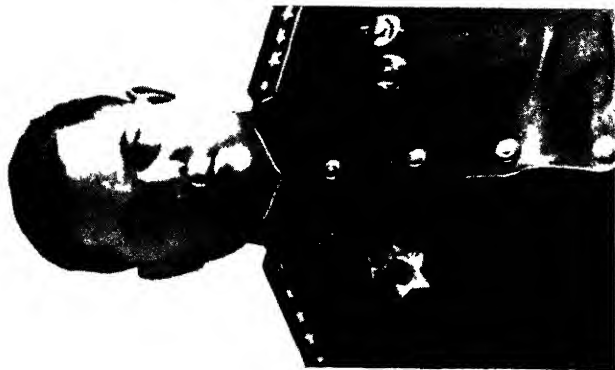
Farther to the north the Russians had also started an offensive near Mozyr, and on the 14th had taken both



GENERAL KONYEV

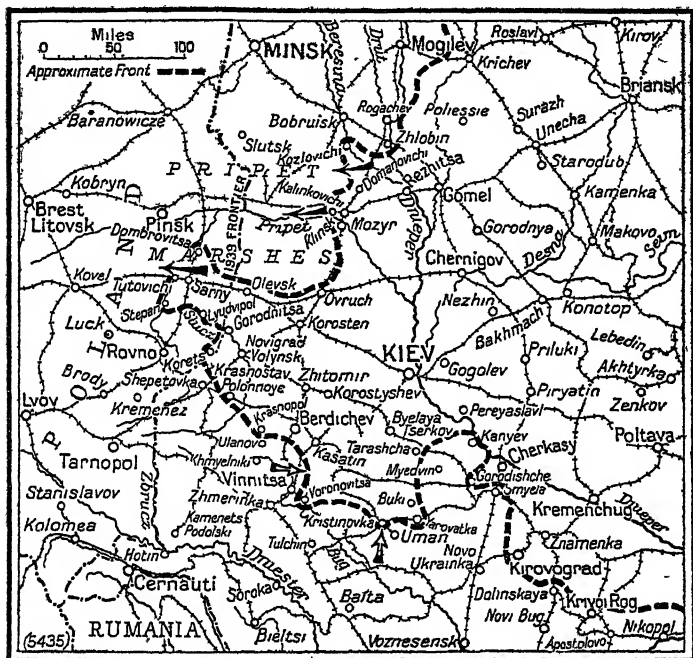


GENERAL ROKOSSOVSKY



GENERAL VATUTIN

that town and Kalinkovichi. These two towns had formed the southern bastion of the German defences of their White Russian front, so that this front was now effectually cut off from the southern Ukrainian front. Vatutin could indeed well afford to turn south-west with a clear conscience.



THE KIEV SALIENT, JANUARY 17, 1944

At this juncture the Russian progress towards Zhmerinka began to flag until it gradually came to a virtual standstill. The reason for this slowing down and ultimate check of the advance must have arisen out of the freakish nature of the winter season. If Vatutin never reached Zhmerinka, the reason may be assumed to have been because the Russian artillery could not progress at the necessary speed. Their "winter" army was hamstrung

by the fickle temperature and by the consequent nature of the snow surface.¹

Their "winter" armament and equipment could never properly come into play. The comparative success of the cavalry divisions moving westwards towards Lvov stands out in sharp contrast to that of the main thrust. Vinnitsa and Zhmerinka were but 90 miles and 125 miles from Vatutin's starting line, yet he was able to advance scarcely more than 80 miles; although his cavalry had actually covered twice that distance towards Lvov.

Throughout these Russian movements the German High Command had been growing increasingly anxious as to their withdrawal from the Bend. They repeatedly counter-attacked in the region of Vinnitsa, but do not appear to have derived any great advantage from their attempts. At certain points they were recklessly throwing heavy attacks in wave after wave without ever a respite—rather a contradiction to their loudly proclaimed policy of "elastic defence." Still, on January 13 they proclaimed "outstanding defensive successes at all focal points."

Such being the situation in the south, it became more than ever necessary for the Russian High Command to distract the enemy's attention by another attack. This time it was launched on the northern front and in the

¹ This view has just received conclusive confirmation from a paragraph appearing in a Moscow message published by *The Times* of May 15, 1944.

The distinguished writer, Vassili Grossman, provides some revealing details of the embarrassments caused to the Red Army by the 'false spring' that threatened to upset offensive plans at the beginning of this year. He states that when he visited General Malinovsky's headquarters in the Ukraine he found the entire military council studying barometers and pressure gauges and listening to the advice of meteorological experts summoned from Moscow. These unfortunate prophets complained to M. Grossman that the generals blamed them for the persistence of bad weather. At last, losing patience with science, General Malinovsky sent the experts by special aeroplane to consult a 95-year-old beekeeper whose fame as a weather-prophet was widespread in the Ukraine. But he, too, could promise no improvement. The elements remained unfriendly, the floods became worse daily, the rivers refused to freeze, swelled and overflowed. At length the Russian plans could not be further delayed, and the offensive was launched in the mud."

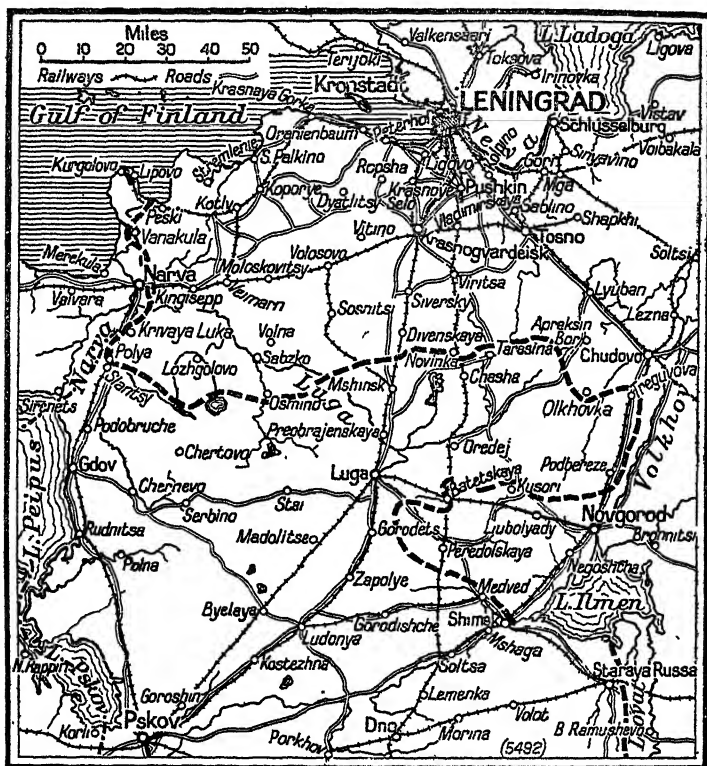
region of Leningrad. On January 14 they made a very heavy attack to the north of Novo Sokolniki, where after three days' fighting they broke through on a front of eight miles, cutting the railway to Dno and Leningrad. There was also a secondary attack to the north of Novgorod along the River Volkhov. On January 17 the Germans had to admit "a withdrawal" to the north of Novgorod ; they added that the fighting was "extremely lively" all the way north from Nevel.

By now Russian operations in the region of Leningrad and to the south of the city were rapidly assuming a very large scale. On January 18 an announcement was made that the attack launched on the 15th had broken through the German lines : simultaneously the Soviet Government stated that to the north of Novgorod an offensive had been set going and was progressing favourably. Lastly, to the north of Novo Sokolniki a similar advance had reached and captured Shubino and other places.

This triple Russian advance acquired yet more impetus as the formidable German investment lines round Leningrad were completely broken. On the 19th Krasnoye Selo and Peterhof were taken. The old Imperial Palace and parks and other buildings at the latter place were left by the Germans all pillaged and in ruins. This historic site had literally and wantonly been devastated. Numbers of German siege guns up to the heaviest calibres were captured. The northerly advance then continued in two directions ; from Oranienbaum and from Pulkhov. On the other eastern flank the all-important junction of Mga was taken on the 21st. So it went on. On the 24th Pushkin (the former Tsarskoye Selo) was reoccupied, as well as the great railway junction of Krasnõgvardeisk (Gatchina). Along the entire front (extending for 40 miles) from this junction to the River Tosno valley the Russians advanced steadily. Having lost the railway leading to Narva the Germans were falling back to the parallel line running to Luga. The Russians thus continued advancing until the end of the month when the main line connecting Leningrad with

Moscow was finally cleared ; the advance had then also reached Kingisepp on the road to Narva.

Meanwhile similar progress was being maintained more to the south, on the Novgorod sector, so that the Germans were now being threatened with encirclement



RUSSIA'S NORTHERN OFFENSIVE, FEBRUARY 3, 1944

from three sides. Novgorod itself was captured on January 20. By the 28th the Russians had reached the railway running south from Batetskaya to Dno, thereby leaving but one railway open to the Germans remaining north and east of Luga. Consequently the enemy were compelled to launch several costly counter-attacks in

this region in order to save their remaining communications. In the meantime Russian progress was also being reported in the sector north of Nevel, until on January 29 Novo Sokolniki itself was captured by a surprise attack. The Germans had then no option but to evacuate the entire area. Leningrad, after a siege of over two years, was at length completely free from any kind of military threat, even of bombardment by the longest-range artillery.

The German *communiqués* during the whole of this month kept repeating that their evasive movements both in the Ukraine and in the north were based on new methods of "elasticity on springs," meaning thereby that they relied very largely on counter-attack to check the Russian progress. Nevertheless, soon afterwards they declared that on the Leningrad front their troops had been instructed "to stand to fight"—the Russians were to be allowed to penetrate "only where we permit them to do so in the interest of our own control of the fighting." They also claimed, correctly enough this time, that they had repelled all Russian attacks in front of Vitebsk from January 13 to 21. On January 20 they announced the loss of Novgorod; but qualified that statement with the rider that they were only fighting to gain time; that the German High Command was "very sparing of men," and that their reserves were so plentiful as to be a nuisance to the inhabitants in the garrison towns of Germany.

Just as in the Ukraine so now in these northern areas this Russian offensive was being seriously handicapped by the mildness of the season. There can be little doubt but that the ultimate Russian goal had been to cut off the whole of the German Sixteenth and Eighteenth Armies by a bold advance towards Riga. In this attempt they were foiled not only by the poor conditions of the snow, but also—and perhaps more effectively—by the fact that they were unable to overthrow the German resistance between Vitebsk and Nevel. This failure could not be wholly ascribed to the strength of the German defences, since similar obstacles had been overcome by Russian artillery at many other points. The conclusion must therefore be that the snow conditions were such that the Russian batteries were unable to play their part on this crucial front. Be that as it may, when judged by Russian progress during the two previous winters, the results now attained must have proved disappointing to the Russian High Command.

For some little time past one interesting fact had been emerging from these various Russian attacks, namely the

sub-division of the whole Russian front into (probably) eight Army Groups. These from north to south were commanded and roughly allocated as follows :

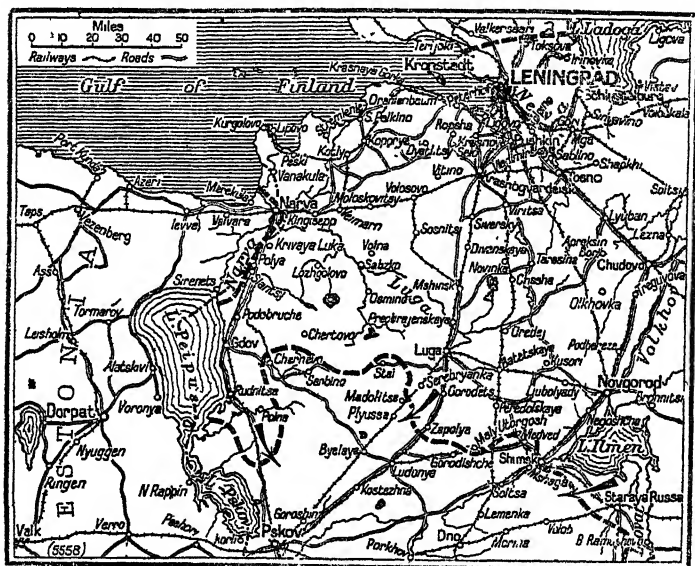
| <i>Sector</i> | <i>Commander</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Leningrad | Govorov. |
| Novgorod and Lake Ilmen | Meretskov. |
| Nevel-Smolensk | Popov. |
| Smolensk-Gomel | Rokossovsky. |
| Kiev Salient | Vatutin. |
| Lower Dnieper | Konev. |
| Dniepropetrovsk | Malinovsky. |
| Nogaïsk Steppe | Tolbukhin. |

This organization was evidently supported by a well-thought-out system of transport and supply which endowed these Army Groups with a considerable capacity for independent movement and action. In fact it is in the Russian organization of supply and maintenance of their armies that we must look for the clue to the causes of success of the Russian armies throughout the latter half of 1943 and in the early months of 1944. The Russian railways had habitually been left by the Germans in a state of total ruin. Moreover the gauge of the track had invariably to be altered back to the normal broader Russian gauge so as to allow Russian rolling stock to use the lines. Also it is inconceivable that the railway system of Russia could be restored to a full working capacity all over the vast theatres of operation at the rate of advance of the Russian armies—even though that rate might not average more than a very few miles per day. Consequently it could only be an immense system of lorry transport that was bearing the full weight of the huge tasks of supply which had to be carried out in order to enable the Russian armies to advance across a devastated country-side. How many thousand lorries, either of Russian construction, or captured from the Germans or supplied on a Lease-Lend basis by Russia's allies, cannot be stated. But it is believed that a veritable army some 250,000 strong was engaged on what we may term purely transport duties : and these figures included many

thousands of women. Large concentrations of transport were inevitable, even though the constructional work on the wrecked railways may have been of a remarkable order. Yet such a mass of vehicles and personnel, combined with the necessity for a most complete system of repair of road vehicles, was most necessary for the Russian operations since the consumption of artillery ammunition alone must have attained astronomical figures. The Russians were probably employing, at any one time all along their front line, a total not far short of 15,000 pieces of ordnance. Russian tactical methods were relying more and more on artillery concentrations on a most lavish scale to obtain decisive results. The supply of the artillery arm alone must have required the capacity for transporting thousands of tons of ammunition per day. Hence the dependence of the Russian armies on huge columns of motor vehicles of every kind over distances that must have been lengthening and growing more numerous every day during any advance.

As a result of this organization and with such resources of road transport the Russian High Command was able to ring the changes of attack in a more effective manner than by the earlier distribution into only three large, and probably unwieldy, groups of armies. So enjoying all the advantages of superior numbers and of the initiative they could vary the points of their offensive in the manner that has been described. It is quite probable then, as reports from Berlin would make it appear, that the Russians at the opening of February were attacking simultaneously at seven points along the entire front between the Baltic and Black seas. The Germans claimed that no progress was being made and that the Russians were wasting their troops to no good purpose. That, however, could scarcely be correct, since in a very short time the German High Command was admitting further withdrawals at various points. For the moment the most striking Russian advance was continuing on the northern front, so it is now proposed to complete the description of these operations down to the close of the Quarter.

At the beginning of February on the Narva front Kingisepp was captured and the Russian Northern Army there reached the defences of Narva. It then swung left and continued along the eastern shores of Lake Peipus down to Gdov, which was found utterly demolished by the retreating enemy. Likewise along the railway leading from Leningrad to Luga the Russians pushed forward steadily, whilst from the direction of Novgorod they overran



RUSSIA'S NORTHERN OFFENSIVE, FEBRUARY 15, 1944

Goroshino. By February 11 Batetskaya was occupied and, on the following day, Luga. The whole Baltic coast was now clear of Germans as far west as Narva; the entire eastern shore of Lake Peipus was also in Russian hands. But Vitebsk had not been taken. Nevertheless good progress could still be made by the Russians who continued converging on Pskov from three directions as fast as the Germans fell back. On February 18 the old German "hedgehog," Staraya Russka, was occupied. That fortified centre, it may be remembered, had been

threatened by the Russians nearly two years earlier, when they had failed to capture it owing, probably, to lack of suitable artillery and to lack of experience and skill in attacking German fortifications. The fall of Staraya Russka was therefore acclaimed as a great triumph. On February 24 Dno was taken. West of Kholm they also advanced until the whole railway running south from Leningrad was once more in Russian possession as far as Novo Sokolniki. Farther south the strong German centre at Rogachev, to the north of Zhtobra, was carried by the Russians who also drew nearer to Bobruisk. The loss of Staraya Russka, Kholm and Rogachev was now duly admitted by the Germans, who also claimed to have destroyed the entire military works and stores at all these places. They also asserted that in the course of these "defensive-offensive" operations they had successfully rectified their front and so far worn down the Russian armies as to render a stabilization of the front a more than probable outcome of this winter's fighting.

The northern campaign now began to simmer down for a variety of reasons, the chief being the fickle weather with unseasonable thaws, as well as the consequent failure to take Vitebsk; the Russian plan—which it had unquestionably been proposed to put into effect—namely, to advance direct on Dunaburg and Riga, had not been found practicable. Nevertheless, the Russian High Command could not feel dissatisfied with the results of the advance which now comprised the expulsion of the enemy from some strongly prepared positions, the complete liberation of Leningrad, as well as the recovery of a long stretch of the Baltic coast. In early March the Russian troops had secured a bridgehead a few miles to the south of Narva and soon isolated the town by cutting the railway to the westwards of it. Progress was made towards Ostrov. On February 29 the very strong German position of Novorzhev (north-north-west of Novo Sokolniki) was taken. The Russians were, in fact, closing in upon Pskov.

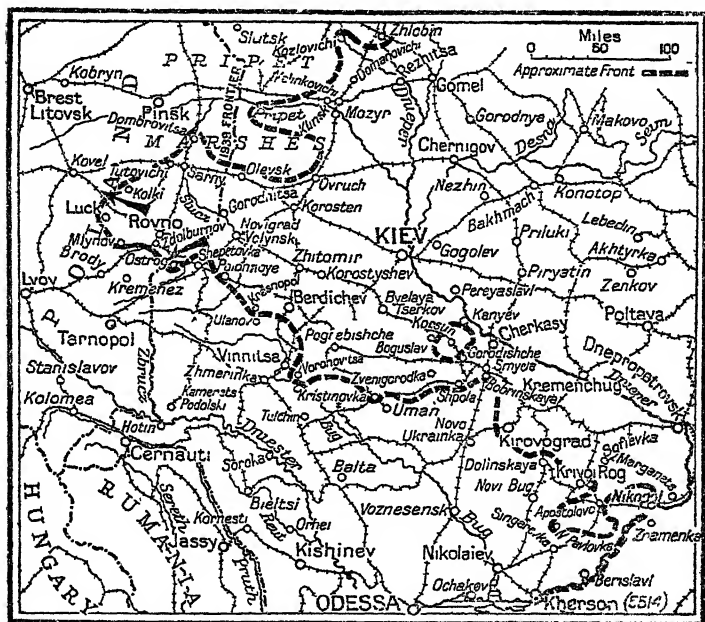
But the month of March saw very little further change in this northern sector. German counter-attacks undoubt-

edly diminished the Russian bridgehead south of Narva ; indeed, on March 31 they even claimed the annihilation of the bulk of several Russian divisions in that area ; also that attacks made by 120,000 Russians against Pskov had been neutralized after having penetrated German positions, after suffering very heavy losses. Whatever truth might exist in these allegations, all serious fighting petered out in this area. So a survey of the whole front may now be made.

Ever since the beginning of the summer of 1943 the ultimate purpose that lay behind the Russian strategy had grown clearer. Once that the Red Army could make good its hold on the region of the Pripet Marshes it would secure one of the main objects of that great advance. With the Pripet Marshes under Russian control the German front was effectively split. Accordingly, for the time being at any rate, the Russian High Command did not intend to drive further forward on the centre of their front ; rather it proposed to advance on the outer flanks. Consequently when the bid made for Zhmerinka railway junction was coming to a halt, the Russian northern armies had been set in motion. Then as soon as it grew evident that owing to climatic reasons the proposed assault on the Vitebsk line could not be carried out and must be postponed, so the Russians grew content to relax all efforts in the north—that is to say, after the clearance of the German invader from the entire region lying to the east of Narva and Lake Peipus, and the liberation of Leningrad. Once more, therefore, they could devote their main effort to the southern front ; but this time with a distinct chance of policy and of objectives. The original plan of a complete encirclement of the German forces remaining in the Dnieper Bend being no longer practicable, because of the failure to take Zhmerinka, the Russian High Command determined to expel the Germans, or to destroy them wherever feasible by operations conducted on a less ambitious scale. In this process they were assisted by the German reactions to the original Russian movements. To save Zhmerinka von Manstein had concentrated all available forces and struck the Russian

flank near Vinnitsa. These attacks were successful in so far as they delayed the enemy's progress; in fact the Germans had even compelled the Russians to give a little ground at certain points.

Now Vatutin, seeing the Germans thoroughly engaged at Vinnitsa and elsewhere busy withdrawing from the Bend, decided to strike afresh towards the Lvov-Odessa



THE KIEV SALIENT, FEBRUARY 9, 1944

railway, this time well to the west of Zhmerinka and Vinnitsa, whilst simultaneously executing a bold movement to trap the Germans who, evidently in the hope of facilitating the extrication of their armies still in the eastern tip of the Bend, were still clinging to the Dnieper banks at Kanev. Instead of moving south or south-westward to relieve the pressure exerted on his own troops round Vinnitsa, Vatutin swung part of his forces due *eastward* in order to meet a like body of Russian troops despatched

by Konev from the Second Ukrainian Army in a due westerly direction. The two Russian forces met and the Germans at Kanev were thus caught. In the trap were not less than ten whole divisions, which, even in their actual depleted condition, when added to supplementary troops, cannot have totalled far short of 100,000 men. These in due course, after having rejected an invitation to surrender, were slowly pressed inwards into a contracting ring where they were finally completely "liquidated."

In the meantime a lesser if no less effective operation disposed of the Germans who had been left in the defences and bridgehead of Nikopol. Here probably some five weak German divisions met a similar fate.

These were the main features of the Russian operations within the Bend during February. The Russian progress was as follows :

The march of the two Russian armies (Vatutin and Konev) designed to cut off the Kanev salient was already well under way at the beginning of February. The Germans were taken completely by surprise by Vatutin's eastward movement which started to the south-east of Byelaya Tserkov, although they might, perhaps, have been expecting some such advance by Konev from the direction of Kirovograd. In spite of stubborn resistance they had not the strength to prevent the two Russian armies effecting their junction on February 3 in the area of Shpola-Zvenigorodka. Some fierce tank battles took place for the possession first of Smyela and then of Shpola ; but the Russians repelled all attacks, and so the trap closed. The ring round the trapped German divisions grew narrower as the Russians took one village or town after another. The doomed Germans, finally divided into two main groups, fought savagely whilst von Manstein made violent attacks from the south to break through the Russians who were then fighting back to back on the two sides of the corridor that now linked their two armies. The Red Air Force made great efforts to prevent any Germans escaping from Korsun to which place the

Russians had slowly driven them back. The Germans attempted to supply their encircled troops by air, whilst evacuating senior officers from Korsun. Numbers of their large transport planes were brought down while thus employed ; thus on February 4 the Russians claimed to have shot down no less than 73. Finally, Korsun was taken on February 14 ; and the end came soon after.

This brief description does scant justice to either the Russian generalship or the severity of the fighting. There remains little doubt that the German High Command had decided to maintain a firm hold of this great pocket abutting on the Dnieper as a base from which to threaten the western Ukraine, just as the garrison and bridgehead at Nikopol were to be retained as a sharp threat to the Russians advancing on the exterior flank of the great Dnieper Bend. Now, to us, after the event, the mere conception of such designs may appear foolish ; yet the immense stores maintained by the Germans at both these places and the desperate resistance offered by them in both cases would appear to confirm the belief that the Kanev area, at any rate, had been designed to serve as an eventual base for a German recapture of the western Ukraine ; von Manstein may well have been deluded in such a hope by the memory of his recapture of Kharkov just one year earlier.

The last phase of this terrific battle is best related by an admirable Russian correspondent :¹

"The annihilation of the encircled enemy proceeded under very difficult conditions. Though it was only the end of January, the snow had entirely melted and the fields were turning green. The streams swelled. The roads were swamps of sticky mud, impassable even for machines on caterpillar tracks. Whole columns of traffic were bogged down. The infantry advanced knee-deep in mud. Ammunition and guns had to be hauled by the crews themselves. Yet the offensive developed at a steady *crescendo* of speed and power. The ring of encirclement was tightened relentlessly. Troops operating from the south-east, north and west chopped bits off the mass of trapped German divisions, and surrounded the garrisons of villages and other fortified places. They squeezed the enemy into narrow spaces, plastered him with cross-fire from trench-mortars, machine-guns and tommy-guns, and finally, having exhausted the blockaded garrisons, wiped out the still-resisting remnants.

"The surrounded forces melted away like snow. When the Red Army men took Gorodische they found all the streets and alleys of this district

¹ Taken from the *Soviet War News*, Feb. 22, 1944.

centre, and even the railway embankment, blocked by long files of abandoned trucks laden with war material. Tanks and several batteries fully supplied with shells were stranded on the northern outskirts. In the small village of Zavadovka the streets were jammed with unattended trucks in rows of two or three. Among them were cars crammed with the personal belongings of the vanished owners, tanks, tractors and long files of guns.

"Where the roads were too bad for the tanks, aircraft took over, pouncing in squadrons on German troop concentrations, strong points and retreating columns.

"The Germans fought back with the fury of the doomed, but their spirit sagged as the ring tightened. The lines of prisoners marching along the washed-out roads grew longer every day.

"Pressed from the north and west, they even took several villages. The main surrounded group, though still within the Soviet ring, moved south-west. From this direction, from the south-west, a German armoured spearhead of four tank divisions tried to batter its way through to relieve their comrades, while a second fist, also of four tank divisions, reinforced by self-propelled artillery and motorized grenadiers, tried to force the ring from the south. All these attacks were smashed into impotence.

"The command of the surrounded enemy group took a desperate decision: to abandon its material, and try to fight a way out of encirclement in separate infantry columns, in groups or singly. The soldiers were issued with triple rations of schnapps, and started out under cover of a raging storm. They met a wall of lead and steel, and were mown down by the thousand. At one single village, Komarovka, over 2,000 died in the snow. Cossack units sabred many more. On another sector several thousand Germans were allowed to pass the advanced Soviet line, and then completely wiped out in a tank and artillery ambush."

The Russians claimed that Konev's Army had captured or destroyed: 470 aircraft, 270 tanks, 1,000 guns, vast quantities of lorries, of stores and even railway rolling stock. The bodies of 55,000 dead Germans were counted on the battlefield; 18,200 were taken prisoner. The forces which attempted the relief are said to have lost some 27,000 in killed alone, together with some 600 tanks.

Obviously the Eleventh German Army was destroyed; as an effective fighting force it had ceased to matter. There exists, however, the possibility that a few hundred, or even a few thousand, Germans may have struggled back to join the relieving forces. Such a contingency may well have happened, for the Russian troops were obviously not forming a continuous ring all round the Germans.¹ These escapees and stragglers were promptly glorified by the German news services and made to represent an achievement of great and important brilliance—as witness

¹ Russian estimates make out that over 2,000, and possibly 3,000, officers escaped by air transport. Neither is it clear that the *entire* Eleventh Army had been trapped.

the panegyric delivered by Dittmar in his broadcast of February 22.

"In this respect the following should be noted. If anywhere, a great success for the Soviets, important even beyond its immediate aspect, began to emerge in the area west of Cherkassy. For the first time in the large-scale fighting of the autumn and winter the Soviets had succeeded in encircling and cutting off a strong German fighting group comprising several divisions. Of course, the Soviet Command did everything possible to crown this success with an annihilating victory. It tried to do so to the fullest extent, as any military command in the world, in the same position, would also have done. The Soviets, as always, were able to draw their forces from the fullness of their strength. Thus first-class Soviet formations for the encirclement as well as for the warding off of our relief formations were massed to an extent which cannot be regarded as usual even on the Eastern front. The hard struggle of the German formations on both sides of the encirclement ring, maturing to a decision only after weeks of fighting, is a clear proof of this. All the more important undoubtedly is the result of this struggle, i.e. the ultimate freeing of the encircled German forces, important for us in the positive sense, as well as for the Soviets in a negative sense. Their massing of strength, their desperate attacks driven forward by the realization of a near and remunerative purpose, as well as their undoubtedly tough resistance, were unable to win through. This fact contains the general import of this struggle, which far transcends this limited operation. The psychological and moral aspects speak for themselves."

And Dittmar concludes by stating that the magnificent behaviour of the German troops and the skill of their leaders had brought about what must be reckoned, firstly, a Russian failure, secondly, clear proof that this failure demonstrated to all the world that the Russian "war potential" and fighting spirit was in a state of decline!

Nor were the German attempts made from outside the Russian ring to relieve their trapped divisions any more successful or less costly. They are best summarized in the words of the official Soviet Information Bureau:

"Beginning with February 5 the German Command, having brought up eight tank and several infantry divisions from other sectors of the front to the area south-west of Zvenigorodka, launched desperate attempts, by striking blows from outside, to break through to the German troops surrounded in the area of Korsun-Shevchenkivskyi."

At the price of enormous losses, the enemy succeeded in driving an insignificant wedge into the dispositions of our troops south of Zvenigorodka. As is known, encountering the determined resistance of the Soviet troops, and being exhausted and bled white in these engagements, the Germans were unable to render aid to their surrounded grouping, and on February 17 it had been completely liquidated by our troops.

After the liquidation of the surrounded German grouping our troops struck a blow against the German troops attempting to aid their surrounded troops, and, in four days' fighting, inflicted a fresh serious defeat

on the Germans which ended in their rout. During the fighting between February 5 and 21, our troops inflicted the following losses on the German troops advancing from the area south of Zvenigorodka : *Destroyed* : 329 planes, 827 tanks, 1,638 lorries, 446 guns. In this fighting the enemy lost in killed about 27,000 officers and men. *Captured* : 115 tanks, 270 guns, 1,850 lorries, 50 armoured cars and troop-carriers, 10 staff omnibuses ; about 1,500 men were taken prisoner."

Simultaneously a lesser, though much shorter if truly no less important drama, of a like nature had been enacted at and around Nikopol on the south-eastern arc of the Dnieper Bend. A double Russian movement was planned to liquidate the appreciable German forces clinging on to this strongly fortified position. From the north-west, within the Bend itself, Malinovsky's Third Army came down on the city of Nikopol, whilst Tolbukhin's Fourth Army arriving on the eastern bank of the river, attacked the German bridgehead on that same river bank. The latter was, in fact, a serious and very strong bow-shaped position stretching over 70 miles along the stream and in places 22 miles in depth. The surrounding country was difficult.

After four days' heavy fighting Malinovsky, who was moving eastwards and south-eastwards, crushed the Germans to the north-east of Krivoi Rog and to the north-east of Nikopol, routing four infantry and three armoured divisions. Marganets and the vital railway junction of Apostolovo were both captured on the next day. This success sealed the fate of the remnants of five German divisions still in Nikopol. By February 8 Nikopol, after a fierce Russian attack, had changed hands. By that time Tolbukhin's men also had fought their way into the bridgehead east of the river. That was the end of the entire German forces in this area. At least 15,000 Germans fell in Nikopol itself ; 2,000 prisoners were taken, in addition to huge quantities of lorries—also tanks and guns. After completing their task, Malinovsky's men returned north-westward to surround Krivoi Rog. On February 9 the Germans admitted "the evacuation" of Nikopol ; but they claimed "great defensive successes" all along the River Dnieper.¹ On February 18 they

¹ Korsun did not fall until February 14,

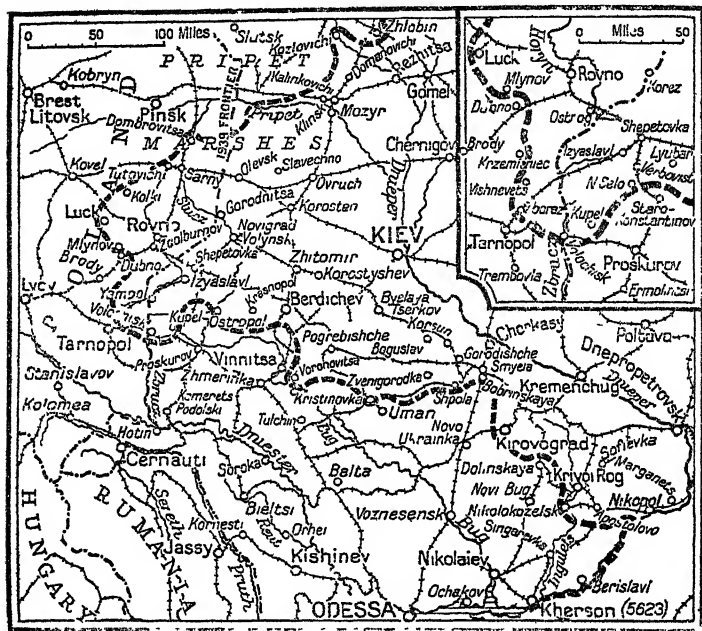
alleged that in the various battles near Nikopol from November 5 to February 15 all enemy attempts to break through had been defeated with the loss of 1,754 tanks and 533 guns. They next went so far as to decorate two divisional generals who had escaped from the Korsun trap by air transport, whilst General Stemmermann, the commander of the trapped Eleventh Army, who had fallen at Korsun, became the object of public honours. Thus was the myth of a great German victory still further fortified.

The Russians were now able to clean up the eastern extremity of the interior of the Bend. On February 17 they announced a fresh crossing of the river near its mouth at Beryslavl. By the 21st they had reached Krivoi Rog; the next day they announced the recovery of the town and of the entire mining area. This was admitted by the Germans to have taken place only after the destruction of all military and industrial installations. Then the Russians, after a slight pause, went on to complete their reconquest of the southern Ukraine.

The situation of the German forces remaining in the southern Ukraine had been growing increasingly grave in like measure as their casualties had been steadily mounting. Indeed, the loss of the bulk of the Eleventh Army at Korsun had left a huge gap in their centre, while their right wing had been most severely weakened by the battles at Nikopol. Moreover, not the slightest economic justification could remain for holding on to the Bend now that the manganese deposits and the iron-ore mines had been lost. There was still worse to come. Their left, western, flank was being imperilled by Vatutin's movements on that side. Definitely they must leave the Bend, and quickly too. Accordingly, during March the clearance of the Ukraine by the Russians could proceed rapidly and effectually although German resistance was never negligible and determined counter-attacks were frequently made.

In view of the heavy losses and the depleted condition of the German divisions, the Russians could well afford to move simultaneously on three fronts. So Malinovsky

with his Third Army made for the great ports of Kherson and Nikolaiev; Konev led the Second Army towards Uman and beyond; Zhukov, now in command of the First Army in place of Vatutin who had been struck down by grave illness, moved south-westwards on to the line



THE KIEV SALIENT, MARCH 6, 1944

Tarnopol-Proskurov. Each of these three advances will now be described in turn.

On March 1 Malinovsky's Third Army moved down to the valley of the River Ingulets following the railway from Apostolovo. On the 4th the Ingulets had been crossed. By the 9th the Russians had advanced 18 to 36 miles on a frontage of almost 100 miles, defeating in this process three armoured and six infantry divisions. On the 11th they had secured Berislavl and the important junction of Dolinskaya. Finally, on the 18th, they captured Kherson, though only after some

serious street fighting. The Germans had prepared the city for a stubborn defence. Firing posts had been set up in all parts, particularly at the street crossings. The attacking troops had special difficulty in dealing with the stone buildings, in which the Germans had installed machine-guns and light artillery pieces, firing through apertures in the walls. Then, suddenly emerging from cover, the Germans attempted to press the attacking forces back beyond the city limits. But the Soviet infantrymen persisted in pushing forward. Accompanied by artillery, they cleared the city house by house, countering the enemy's efforts with still more determined attacks till the city was theirs. By that date the Russians claimed to have inflicted losses on the Germans in the eastern part of the Bend amounting to 20,000 killed and 2,500 prisoners. Resuming his advance, Malinovsky next forced a passage over the River Ingulets and was able to surround a large German force which once more had been driven into a "sack" that measured some 20 by 10-15 miles. Ten thousand Germans were lost in escaping from the trap. Thus were the remains of the resuscitated German Sixth Army wiped out. A Russian account of its end runs as follows.

Surmounting all obstacles caused by the spring thaw and the absence of roads, the Soviet troops rapidly dislodged the Germans from their intermediate lines and pursued them into the area between the Rivers Ingulets and Ingul. The Soviet forces struck from north to south, and so split the Germans into two unequal parts. Then they began to press in from three sides. In one place, owing to the swiftness of the Soviet attack, the retreating German troops were caught marching along the roads in column formation, cut off, trapped in a ring and wiped out. Other divisions suffered a similar fate. They had organized motorized columns—one of which stretched over a distance of four miles—for their attempt to break through to the west. They concentrated infantry, mobile units, artillery and mortars into a single powerful striking force supported by 30 or 40 tanks, and began to move along the railway to Khutora Shevchenko. There the fighting raged all night. German tanks, mobile units, infantry and even columns of transport made a supreme effort to reach the River Ingul, and so escape to Nikolaiev. But the situation around Privolnoye was such that this attempt was doomed in advance. A Soviet formation had forced the Ingul at this spot a few days earlier, seized Privolnoye, and even pushed on a considerable distance ahead. So the Germans struck at the strongest link in the encircling chain.

Other Soviet regiments had crept forward through a network of ravines and gullies, and then took up their positions, waiting until the enemy should break through. In due course German advanced detachments,

together with tanks, infantry and motor columns, crossed the railway and walked right into the sack. Wholesale slaughter began. The German mobile groups and infantry maintained desperate retaliatory fire, and even counter-attacked in various directions, but they were overwhelmed by superior fire-power. At dawn the next day the Soviet troops began to dismember the German forces by blows at the flanks, and to annihilate the dismembered groups piecemeal. So the Germans discarded their machines and heavy arms and tried to extricate themselves from the sack on foot in small bodies. Two badly mangled German infantry regiments thought they had broken through south-westwards of Khutora Shevchenko, and their commanders hastened to report to headquarters that they had emerged from encirclement. But no sooner did they reach the River Ingul than they were attacked and exterminated. Some German prisoners stated that indescribable panic and confusion had reigned among the retreating divisions, even before they were completely surrounded.

This encircling operation was carried out at a time when the thaw had obliterated the roads—and what is more, in the black earth region. The Soviet troops achieved success only by a great mastery of their weapons combined with their phenomenal stamina.

Finally the Third Army moved on the city of Nikolaiev from three directions, east, north-east and north. But they did not succeed in capturing that port until March 28.

Such is a brief narrative of Malinovsky's advance which may be said to have cleared the Germans entirely from the eastern end of the Dnieper Bend with a loss of about 50,000 men in killed and captured alone.

In the centre, Konev had set his army in motion during the first week of March. After five days' heavy fighting he succeeded in breaking the German resistance along a front of over 100 miles; captured the towns of Uman and Kristinovka after defeating one artillery, six armoured and seven infantry divisions. In this fighting some 20,000 Germans were killed. It had been a serious engagement; over 2,000 tanks had been engaged in a great armoured struggle. The Germans retreated in such disorder that they abandoned stocks of ammunition and—strange to say—even food intact, while they abandoned the town of Uman unharmed. The Russians then began to swing westwards and made good progress. On the 12th the town of Gayvoron, on the River Bug, was taken. At the same time Russian columns seemed also to spread out to the south and south-east, whilst from Gayvoron their main forces continued to Pervomaisk, which the Germans defended stoutly, since it was clear that its loss

must throw open the way to Odessa. But after two days' severe struggle they were ejected on March 22.

Meanwhile, on March 18, Konev had reached Yampol and so the River Dniester. Any possible German defence of the line of the Bug was now out of the question, if only because the German losses and disorganization would render the occupation of any long, well-designed line of resistance almost impracticable. Indeed, the losses of the German Ukrainian armies in men and equipment might now be regarded as paralysing to any preconceived plan of defence. Central control had become so erratic that the German forces proved incapable of defending any one of the formidable river lines: the Bug, the Dniester and finally the Pruth all fell to the Russians. The upper and middle reaches of the Dniester lie in a narrow rocky gorge, often between lofty precipitous banks. An American critic had described this river as the probable mainstay of the German defence. Yet the Red Army had crossed it in a single day. In fact it may be assumed that the German withdrawal had, in some places at least, degenerated into little better than a complete rout. Only the standing garrisons of places like Tarnopol could be relied upon to offer an ordered resistance to the oncoming Russians.

Nevertheless it was the task set to Zhukov's First Ukrainian Army which proved the decisive factor in expediting the German retreat from the Bend. The earlier Russian thrust, designed to seize the crucial railway junction of Zhmerinka, had failed. For the next four weeks von Manstein had struggled desperately to save his rail communications by counter-attacking the Russians in the direction of Vinnitsa, that is by concentrating a powerful attack at the western flank of the Russian thrust: this manoeuvre was becoming a classic German reply to every dangerous Russian attack.¹ Now the Russians took a leaf from the German book. Starting from a base lying along a line Rovno-Shepetovka, that is still farther to the west of Vinnitsa, on March 4 they

¹ So it would appear to have been employed by the Germans to hold the British drive against Caen.

launched a strong attack on a wide front, routing the Germans, who were said to be in a strength of four armoured and eight infantry divisions. The Russians then advanced to a varying depth of 15 to 30 miles. Two days later they took Volochisk and thereby cut the main line running back into Poland from Odessa. On March 12 the remaining loop-line was also interrupted below Proskurov. By their clever move they had also completely turned the German defences on the head waters of the River Bug.

Before that date the Germans had made determined efforts to prevent the Russians reaching Staro Konstantinov : but in vain. On March 9 they lost that town, and on the next day were fighting desperately in the streets of Tarnopol. In the meantime further east the Germans were very hard pressed to save Vinnitsa, to which the Russians were advancing from the north and from the east. They had already crossed the Bug at several points to the north-west of that town and were closing in on it rapidly.

The evil plight of the Germans could no longer be disguised from the world at large. They had repeatedly and long claimed "defensive successes" in all these battles in the Ukraine. Now they suddenly declared that Zhukov was attacking with some 40 divisions ; that they were shortening their front to economize troops ; and that, as the Eastern Front was now becoming of secondary importance to the menace from the west, they were reducing their forces in that theatre. Be that as it may, the Russians were now able to advance rapidly towards the R. Dniester. By March 22 an entire German army group was threatened with complete encirclement at Proskurov. On the 24th the River Sereth had been crossed, while on the next day Proskurov was captured : its fall had flattened out an important German salient on the R. Dniester which the Russians now held for a length of 50 miles. They were also at Kamenets-Podolsk, where a motorized force was cut off. Once again the Germans had been placed in a "sack" ; this time a good part of their First Armoured Army was virtually encircled to the

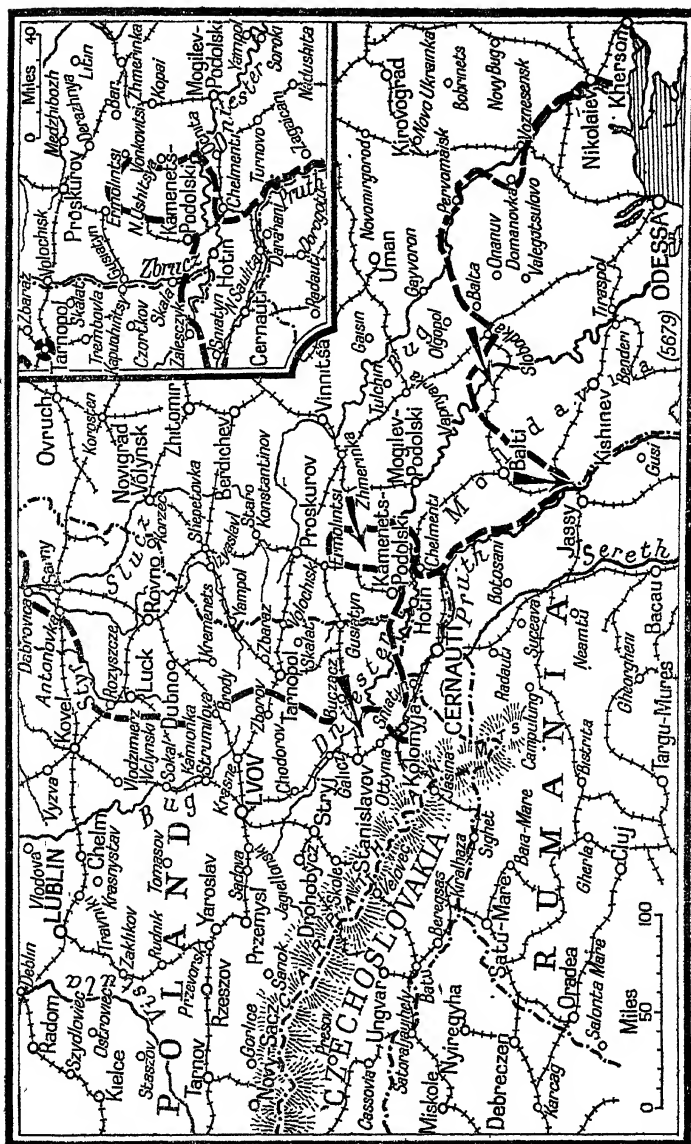
north and west of that town. In addition the garrisons of Tarnopol and Kamenets-Podolsk had been isolated. The origin of this situation lay in the combined movements of Zhukov's and Malinovsky's armies. Zhukov had broken through the space between Tarnopol and Proskurov in a somewhat southerly direction, whilst Konev, on Zhukov's left, had pushed forward more westwards across the River Dniester and continued his advance even across the Pruth. He had thus reached the old Soviet-Rumanian frontier, that is the Carpathian foothills, over a length of over 50 miles. By this manoeuvre the Germans at and near Kamenets-Podolsk were left with a corridor of some 30 miles in width as their only means of escape. The majority of the men might conceivably still be evacuated, but never their heavy equipment. In the meantime to the west of Tarnopol the Russians had taken Kozlov and, next day, Kamenets. With its fall the last railway link which the Germans still south of Proskurov could use had been cut. Tarnopol could now be invested by the Russians. Before the close of the month the Russians had reached the River Pruth at Cernauti, which they entered on the 30th. They had also captured Kolomiya, which stands on the railway crossing the Carpathians into Ruthenia. To the south of Kamenets-Podolsk they had reached the upper Dniester, whilst farther south-east they had taken Balta and the railway junction of Slobodka. Thus they were closing in on the great port of Odessa itself.

The long-drawn-out battle of the Dnieper Bend had now virtually concluded with the total defeat of the Germans. For six long months, ever since the passage of the river at Kremenchug by the Russians at the end of September, 1943, the Germans had struggled hard to retain their hold on what they had regarded as a great flanking position from which they might some day return to threaten the Russian advance—if this be regarded as a whole. In addition they had doggedly striven to retain their grip on the mineral and agricultural resources of the Ukraine. The Russian reply had been Vatutin's and then Zhukov's powerful advances westwards from Kiev

by which the Germans had slowly been compelled to swing back the left flank of von Manstein's army group until it stood parallel to its main railway communications : that is from generally facing east it was forced back until it stood on a general line running east to west. Then came the huge casualty lists incurred by von Manstein's prodigal counter-attacks south-west of Kiev. Next the liquidation of the German Eleventh Army at Korsun, followed by a similar dissolution of the resurrected Sixth Army at Nikopol, Krivoi Rog and north of Kherson. The Seventeenth Army, now isolated in the Crimea, might be considered as doomed. In addition to this huge loss of men and material they had suffered the capture of the pivotal field fortresses of Kherson, Krivoi Rog and Vinnitsa. Nearly all their railway communications had been destroyed or lost. They had been utterly unable to pretend to hold the river lines of the Bug and of the Dniester : even the River Pruth had been crossed. Now the Red Army had reached the foothills of the Carpathians ; and thereby once more this German southern front had been split, just as their greater front had been severed into two halves when the Russians had made good their footing on either side of the Pripet Marshes in the previous autumn.

In the Ukraine the Germans had concentrated three-quarters of the armour still available on the Southern Front. Yet in two weeks the Red Army had routed a dozen German tank divisions ; six of these, including the redoubtable S.S. "Adolf Hitler" Tank Division, lost all their material. Several thousand tank troops had abandoned their machines and fled. Five hundred tanks and self-propelled guns, including 200 Tigers, Panthers and Ferdinands all in working order, were captured in the advance on Uman alone. In this same operation a powerful group of six panzer divisions had been surprised by Marshal Konev's forces, attacked with great vigour, and routed before it could prepare for battle, although here the Germans had numerical superiority in tanks.

These Soviet successes were the result of vastly superior mobility and manoeuvrability. The Tigers and Panthers



THE PRUTH OFFENSIVE, MARCH 30, 1944

could only crawl through the mud. There they floundered about, until many of the crews fled *en masse*, deserting their machines.

But the true cause for these disasters lay deeper still. Twice during this Ukrainian campaign the Germans had made the gravest of miscalculations. The first, at the end of September, lay in their preconceived idea that the coming of the rainy period must bring the Russian offensive to a halt. Now again in February, 1944, they had fondly imagined that the period of thaw must paralyse all the Russian movements. But the Russians had taken all measures to carry through their advance in spite of thaw and mud. That achievement may one day well come to be regarded as one of the most remarkable of the entire war. The whole Russian Army seemed to be converted into an army of road-menders and porters. Improvised horsed transport columns appeared. Special motor trucks fitted with the broadest of tracks and built with a specially high road clearance replaced wheeled lorries. When these struggled, floundered and sank into the slime, ammunition was carried on men's backs. The whole country population lent a hand. Thanks to this stupendous effort the Russian armies progressed laboriously and slowly through the mud. Great was their reward. On the other side, the Germans were reduced to impotence. Tanks, guns and vehicles remained hopelessly bogged. Many columns were captured owing to their being crowded and jammed in villages, while isolated German machines of every kind lay sunk in the mud, waiting till the fine weather should allow the Russians to collect their booty.

Nothing is more remarkable than the manner in which the Russian High Command exploited these fundamental German errors. Misplaced reliance on climatic obstacles had conduced to an insensate reluctance to abandon the Bend. Yet the danger must have been plain. By reaching ever farther westwards the Russians had slowly compelled von Manstein to bring back his left wing until he was facing north. He thus exposed his communications and lost them. First the Russians had aimed their

blows towards Zhmerinka. Next they renewed their stroke west of Vinnitsa. Finally, they were able to head direct for Tarnopol and the Lvov corridor. Each time that von Manstein had tried to parry the danger—at Krivoi Rog, Zhitomir, Vinnitsa, Tarnopol—each time the Russians had eventually counter-attacked him farther away on his vital flank. The Germans might achieve some local success ; but that meant nothing, if it did not upset the balance of the whole picture. Such local successes simply involved two consequences : exhaustion of the German reserves and a greater disinclination to evacuate the Bend—all at the cost of crippling losses in men and material. What patience and pertinacity the Russian High Command had shown !

The total German losses within the Dnieper Bend, ever since the Russians had forced a passage over the river at Kremenchug at the end of September, 1943, had risen steadily. The costly attacks against the Kiev "bulge" and the liquidation of ten divisions at Korsun had not only cost men, but had occasioned immense losses of arms, ammunition and stores. It is more than likely that the German casualty lists for these six months may have amounted to some 750,000 men totally lost, whilst the number of tanks and guns destroyed, abandoned or captured may have exceeded some thousands of either arm.

The official Soviet Information Bureau issued the following *résumé* of the situation :

The German Army is being forced farther and farther west because of the terrific losses that the Red Army has inflicted on the Germans in the past 33 months. During the first two years of hostilities on the Soviet-German front, Germany and her allies lost 6,400,000 officers and men in killed and captured alone. Then began the summer campaign of last year. From July 5 to November 4 Hitler lost nearly 1,000,000 more men dead or taken prisoner. Moreover, many of the 1,700,000 Germans wounded last summer will never be able to fight again. As soon as the summer campaign was over the winter campaign started. Though complete figures are not yet available, it is clear that the losses the German Army has suffered so far this winter at Leningrad, in the Ukraine and elsewhere are, if not larger, then certainly not much less than they had to endure last summer.

These figures may appear high. Yet if losses caused by the savage guerilla warfare ceaselessly and mercilessly

continued in rear of the German front, as well as the undoubtedly high toll taken of the German armies by climate and sickness, be taken into account, it might well be that the totals are not so far from fact—certainly not in relation to the autumn and winter campaign of 1943-44.

Well might General Dittmar in his broadcast declare that the German situation had become "positively critical." Nevertheless the German official statements, in admitting the loss of Kherson, Vinnitsa and Proskurov, would still claim that all military and industrial installations had been destroyed, while all German movements had been voluntary withdrawals carried out without enemy interference! In truth, only at Vitebsk in the north could the Russians be said to have really failed to inflict one of a long string of defeats on the *Wehrmacht* such as they themselves had scarcely suffered even in the bad days of 1941.

■

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR IN THE WEST

I : AT SEA

There were no further engagements with what was left of the German Fleet during the Eighteenth Quarter of the war. The *Scharnhorst* had been sunk. The *Gneisenau*, so injured that her repair would take years rather than months, was slowly reconstructing at Gdynia. The *Tirpitz* was repairing the damage inflicted by our midget submarines in Alten Fjord north of Hammerfest. Two pocket battleships and three or four cruisers alone were left of the larger surface craft. British and American activities were devoted first and foremost to the campaign against the still active U-boats and secondly to the tightening of the naval blockade, of which the campaign against the enemy's coastal shipping in the narrow seas was an important part.

Three joint statements on the progress of the war against the U-boats were issued under the authority of Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt. The first was made public on February 9. It was brief and highly satisfactory. It ran thus :

"The year 1944 has opened with a very satisfactory first month for the Allies in their continued campaign against the U-boat. In spite of the limited opportunities to attack U-boats owing to the extreme caution now exercised by them, more were destroyed in January than in December. This has been accomplished by unrelenting offensive action by our surface and air forces. The amount of merchant ship tonnage sunk by U-boats during January, 1944, is among the lowest monthly figures for the whole war. The German claims should, as usual, be ignored as they are grossly exaggerated and issued purely for propaganda purposes."

Few weeks, indeed, passed without German claims to have made a large "bag" of destroyers, frigates and corvettes, as well as of merchantmen. At the fifth naval session at Stettin Admiral Dönitz, though he admitted that the Allies had "succeeded in gaining the advantage in submarine defence," boasted that Germany would soon "catch up with the enemy," and vaunted that the day would come "when I shall offer Churchill a first-rate submarine war." He said he would smash British supply with

"a new submarine weapon" this year.¹ No evidence of the use of such a weapon became known in the quarter.

On January 22 the Admiralty and Air Ministry announced the decisive defeat of attacks by U-boats and aircraft using glider bombs on an Atlantic convoy. The action had been fought "some weeks ago," i.e. either in December or in early January. Even though it may have happened before the opening of the Quarter under review in this volume, the reader may be interested in the following summary of its chief incidents :

The convoy, north-bound to the United Kingdom, was provided with close escort by surface forces of the Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy, by American naval aircraft, by aircraft (Hudsons and Venturas) of Coastal Command, R.A.F., operating from Gibraltar and the Azores, and by Liberators and Sunderlands of Coastal Command operating from British bases. When the convoy was about 250 miles west-south-west of Cape St. Vincent hostile aircraft were observed shadowing the ships. They were driven off by Coastal Command. Action was not joined until the convoy had reached a position about midway between the Azores and the Portuguese coast. After a Leigh-Light aircraft had bombed and perhaps damaged a submarine, H.M. frigate *Exe* (Commander G. V. Legassick) detected a U-boat and would appear to have damaged it with depth charges. Other U-boats were encountered by H.M. sloop *Chanticleer* (Lieut.-Commander R. H. Bristowe) and the sloop *Crane* (Lieut.-Commander R. G. Jenkins), and were forced to submerge.

Before daybreak on the following morning an aircraft attacked a U-boat and straddled it with depth charges, probably destroying it. Later two more U-boats were seen and attacked by the corvettes H.M.C.S. *Calgary* (Lieut.-Commander H. K. Hill) and H.M.C.S. *Snowberry* (Lieut. J. A. Dunn). Towards evening a number of U-boats were reported concentrating ahead of the convoy. H.M. frigate *Nene* (Commander J. D. Birch), with the *Calgary* and *Snowberry*, hunted and soon illuminated a U-boat, which dived after being engaged with gunfire, but was attacked with depth charges and forced to the surface, where all three ships opened on her with every gun that bore. Members of her crew were seen escaping from her. Seventeen were made prisoners. The U-boat sank.

Next day the convoy came within effective range of protective aircraft operating from British bases and Liberators arrived to give close escort. For the next 15 hours the enemy made no attack whatever, but towards nightfall it was estimated that ten U-boats were attempting to get into position for attack on the flanks and astern of the convoy. They were attacked by the frigate *Essington* (Lieut.-Commander W. Lambert) which blew one to the surface with depth charges and may have destroyed her. After an encounter between another U-boat and the frigate H.M.S. *Foley* so much oil was visible that this U-boat was reckoned as "probably destroyed." These reverses seem to have discouraged the U-boats from further attacks.

The enemy now adopted new tactics and opened attacks on the convoy with large forces of bomber aircraft operating from bases in France. Fight-

¹ Reported by the naval correspondent of the German Oversea News Agency and reproduced by *Reuter*, January 21.

ing began about 600 miles west of Ushant when a Focke-Wulf 200 was beaten off damaged. Then came an attack by 15 bombers, which were hotly engaged, but pressed home determined attacks with glider bombs. While the action was at its height the convoy escort was reinforced by the anti-aircraft Canadian cruiser, *Prince Robert* (Capt. A. M. Hope), while aircraft of Coastal Command engaged the attackers. The action lasted two and a half hours. Only two ships sustained any damage in the convoy, and every attempt against the escorting ships failed. Several of the enemy aircraft were shot down; two were certainly destroyed, and others may not have been able to reach land.

The convoy escort in this engagement of four days and three nights was commanded by Capt. L. F. Durnford-Slater in the sloop H.M.S. *Pheasant*. The enemy aircraft using glider bombs were recognized as Heinkel 177 four-engined bombers.

On February 19 a joint announcement by the Admiralty and the Air Ministry described the recent interception of a number of U-boats which had attempted to make individual passages from the Atlantic into the Mediterranean and the destruction of three of them by British warships and aircraft of Coastal Command based on Gibraltar. Several U-boats were damaged in these operations, which extended over 11 days. The first U-boat destroyed was hit by depth charges dropped by a Wellington bomber and 49 of her crew were picked up. Another U-boat was damaged by a Wellington bomber and submerged, but would seem to have escaped, and yet another was attacked by H.M.S. *Velox* with inconclusive results. It may, however, have been this U-boat which was detected near a convoy traversing the Straits and was attacked by the trawler *Imperialist* and driven to the surface by depth charges, when

“the enemy’s conning-tower was seen to be buckled and the barrel of the forward gun twisted.” The trawler opened fire at once and scored hits on the damaged U-boat, which submerged and was no more seen. On the night after this attack the destroyer *Douglas* (Lieut.-Commander K. H. Phibbs) opened fire on a U-boat which had surfaced, and scored several hits. Her crew took to the water and 18 were taken prisoners. Their ship sank.

On the following day a combined attack on another U-boat was undertaken by the destroyers *Witherington*, *Active* and *Wishart*, but the full results could not be observed. Shortly before midnight the sloop *Fleetwood* (Commander W. B. Piggott) lit up a U-boat “by means of star-shell.” The U-boat submerged in a crash dive, but the *Fleetwood* “carried out four depth-charge attacks over the U-boat’s diving position. . . . Later a number of survivors were picked up.”

These successful operations were carried out under the

orders of Vice-Admiral Sir Harold Martin Burrough, Flag Officer Commanding, Gibraltar.

Other announcements of the destruction of U-boats were made from time to time. On January 28 the U.S. Navy Department stated that one had been sunk by an escort carrier and destroyers after an action lasting 27 hours. On February 14 the same Department announced the sinking of two U-boats by U.S. aircraft in the South Atlantic. February was, indeed, a bad month for the U-boats, and this joint Anglo-American statement was most comforting.

"In spite of the increase in traffic of the United Nations' shipping in the Atlantic, February, 1944, was the lowest month as to tonnage of Allied merchant shipping losses to enemy U-boat action since the United States entered the war; and February was the second lowest month of the entire war.

Again there were more U-boats than merchant vessels sunk, so the exchange rate remains favourable to the United Nations. In actual numbers a few more U-boats were sunk in February than in January."

In March the exchange was little less favourable to the Allies than it had been in February. The joint statement which was issued on April 9 ran thus :

"March was an active month in the war against the U-boats which operated in widely dispersed areas from the Barents Sea to the Indian Ocean. The enemy has persevered vainly in strenuous endeavours to disrupt our flow of supplies to Russia by the northern route. Our merchant shipping losses were mainly incurred in far distant seas; though a little higher than in February they were still low, and the rate of sinking U-boats was fully maintained."

On March 19 the Admiralty announced the destruction of six U-boats in the North Atlantic in the course of operations extending over 20 days and carried out by the sloops of the Second Escort Group led by Captain F. J. Walker in H.M.S. *Starling*. Towards the end of these operations H.M. sloop *Woodpecker* (Commander H. L. Pryse) was torpedoed and had to be taken in tow.

"The Board of Admiralty regrets to announce that eight days later H.M.S. *Woodpecker* foundered under the stress of heavy weather. Her entire ship's company was safely transferred to other ships. The Second Escort Group suffered no casualties during these highly successful actions."

The first contact with the enemy was made about 300 miles south-west of Ireland. H.M.S. *Wild Goose* (Lieut.-Commander D. E. G. Wemyss) detected a U-boat between herself and H.M.S. *Magpie* (Lieut.-Commander H. S. Abram). These sloops were joined by the *Starling*, and they attacked with depth charges. Oil, wood and clothing of German manufacture from the depths gave evidence of the destruction of the U-boat. Later the group

joined a homeward-bound convoy which was threatened. Towards night-fall the *Wild Goose* sighted a U-boat diving a mile away on her port bow. The *Starling* and *Magpie* closed at speed while the convoy altered course to clear the area of the hunt. Shortly afterwards the periscope of a U-boat broke surface only 20 yards from the *Wild Goose*. She engaged with gunfire while the *Woodpecker* attacked with depth charges. Deep under-water explosions were heard later and much oil and wreckage came to the surface.

Next day the sloop *Kite* (Lieut.-Commander W. F. Segrave) sighted a U-boat emerging from a patch of mist some miles ahead of the convoy. The *Kite* and *Magpie* harried the U-boat until the convoy had passed. The *Wild Goose* meanwhile had detected another U-boat and together with the *Starling* attacked it. Eventually a deep under-water explosion was heard and evidence pointing to the U-boat's destruction sighted. The *Starling* and *Wild Goose* then "set course to join H.M.S. *Kite* in attacking the U-boat which had first been sighted ahead of the convoy. All four ships continued this hunt . . . until late in the afternoon watch. Nine hours after the first sighting a final pattern of depth charges fired by H.M.S. *Starling* brought much wreckage to the surface and established the destruction of the third U-boat within the space of 16 hours.

On the following morning the Group left the convoy and went on patrol. That night the *Wild Goose* attacked another submarine. Her depth charges caused very heavy explosions below the surface and next morning a huge patch of oil and wooden wreckage including part of a submarine's upper deck told the tale of another success. Then came a week of patrolling without incident, after which the Group joined an eastbound convoy with which "at least one U-boat was . . . in contact." The *Woodpecker* first made contact with the U-boat and for five and a half hours she and H.M.S. *Starling* attacked with depth charges. The flagship had discharged her last depth charge when the U-boat surfaced a mile away and was promptly attacked by gunfire. Within eight minutes the U-boat's crew had abandoned ship and the U-boat had sunk. All the Germans, 51 in number, were picked up and brought to Liverpool, where Captain Walker and his ships and crews were welcomed by the First Lord and immense crowds on their return from what Mr. Alexander described as "one of the greatest cruises—the greatest cruise, perhaps, ever undertaken by an escort group."

Nevertheless the U-boats scored several successes during the quarter and sank several British and United States warships in the Atlantic. On January 4 the Navy Department announced the sinking of the old destroyer *Leary* in the Atlantic by torpedo and the destruction of the more modern *Turner* outside New York harbour by unexplained internal explosions.¹

The sinkings of the British destroyers *Hurricane* (Commander J. R. Westmacott), *Tynedale* (Lieut.-Commander J. J. Yorke) and *Holcombe* (Lieutenant F. M. Graves) were announced on January 13, 20 and 26 respectively. On February 3 the Admiralty reported the loss of the

¹ Of a complement of probably more than 200 men 163 were saved, of whom 113 were injured, many by severe burns.

frigate *Tweed* (Lieut.-Commander R. S. Miller) and that of the destroyer *Hardy* (Captain W. H. Robson), the second of that name to be lost in this war,¹ on February 24. The destroyer *Warwick* (Commander D. A. Rayner) was reported lost on March 1 and the *Mahratta* (Lieut.-Commander E. A. Drought), which may have gone down in the Mediterranean, on March 17. During the last third of March the Admiralty reported the loss of the frigate *Gould* (Lieutenant D. W. Ungood) and the corvette *Asphodel* (Lieutenant A. M. Halliday). A Canadian minesweeper was lost ashore after a collision. Two minesweepers and four trawlers and the U.S. destroyer escort *Leopold* were also reported lost during the quarter.² The heaviest loss was that of a U.S. troopship sunk "in European waters" with the loss of about 1,000 lives, which was reported on February 17.

The blockade tightened steadily. On January 26 Lord Selborne, Minister of Economic Warfare, said of communications between Germany and Japan :

There were ships lying in ports of the Bay of Biscay laden with machine tools, prototypes of aircraft, tanks and the like, and special components, all much needed by Japan, which were threatened and in two cases had been disabled by bombing attack. The rest "feared to take the plunge" and were remaining in port. Germany required rubber, tin, tungsten, opium and gums from Japan, but during the last blockade-running season she had lost three-quarters of what she attempted to get in.³

On February 4 the U.S. Navy Department announced the defeat of an attempt by three German ships to run the blockade and bring important cargoes of vital war materials to the Reich. They were caught early in January and within the space of 48 hours all three were sent to the bottom of the South Atlantic. The announcement stated :

"The enemy ships sunk were the *Burgenland*, *Rio Grande*, and the *Weserland*, en route from Far Eastern Japanese-held ports. Their holds were filled with thousands of tons of rubber, tin, fats and strategic ores.

¹ For the loss of the first *Hardy* at Narvik see *The Third Quarter*, p. 35.

² Some of these ships may well have fallen victims to mines or to enemy air attack.

³ In his speech of March 7 the First Lord said that only two of 11 blockade-runners which had set out from Japan on the long voyage to Europe during the past twelvemonth had reached port, both damaged.

The blockade-runners were sunk by the U.S. destroyer *Somers*, the light cruiser *Omaha* and the destroyer *Jouett*. A large number of prisoners were picked up after the sinkings. In two of the sinkings Navy search aircraft found the enemy ships and called for the surface force to complete their destruction. The *Weserland* fell to the *Somers* alone, while the other two were scuttled by their crews and their sinking was hastened by gunfire from the *Omaha* and *Jouett*."

The American squadron was commanded by Vice-Admiral Jonas Ingram. After the action its crews recovered hundreds of tons of baled rubber found floating amid the debris.

The operations conducted by our light naval craft, aided on many occasions by Coastal Command aircraft, were generally successful. They were designed to prevent the enemy from relieving the strain on his railway and road transport by moving bulky cargoes by sea, whether from Norway to the Reich or from German to French ports. The first sharp action during the quarter was fought on February 6 when light British naval forces under Commander B. J. de St. Croix,

"encountered an enemy force consisting of one Elbing class destroyer and several mine-sweepers. During a brief engagement several hits were seen on the destroyer before it escaped at high speed under cover of a smoke screen." The remainder of the German ships sought safety inshore, but before they reached safety one was set on fire and another damaged.

On the night of February 14 our light coastal forces during a sweep off the Dutch coast met and attacked a hostile force including an anti-aircraft ship and two heavily armed trawlers. The anti-aircraft ship stopped two torpedoes and was last seen dismasted, stationary and badly damaged, and one of the trawlers was left burning. Later our ships intercepted several groups of E-boats. "A series of gun actions developed at close range, and in the course of these one E-boat was left stopped and on fire and four others were severely damaged." All our ships returned safely having suffered a small number of casualties and superficial damage.

On February 19 the Admiralty announced that British submarines in recent patrols had sunk 19 enemy ships during patrols in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Far East, had probably sunk six more and had damaged eight. These ships varied in size from the largest type of supply ship to coastal craft.

One ship of large size though strongly escorted was hit by three torpedoes off the Norwegian coast and was seen to sink. Another large supply ship and one of medium size were torpedoed by another submarine off south-western Norway, but the counter-measures taken by their escort prevented the full results of the attack being observed.

An attack by E-boats on a convoy off the East Coast of Britain before dawn on February 23 was beaten off by light naval forces and the destroyer *Garth* (Captain C. R. Parry) blew up an E-boat. An enemy convoy was intercepted off Jersey early on February 28 by light coastal forces under Lieutenant T. J. Mathias and a trawler of the escort was set ablaze. On the night of March 5 an enemy patrol was intercepted by a force under Lieutenant G. J. MacDonald and an armed trawler was torpedoed and destroyed. There was another successful naval sweep off the Dutch coast early on March 7 when light coastal forces under Lieut.-Commander D. H. McCowan penetrated to within a short distance of Ymuiden harbour and attacked a coastal defence vessel, eight or nine R-boats and four armed trawlers.

"During the course of a short but sharp gun action hits were observed on the coastal defence vessel, a trawler and one of the R-boats. All three . . . burst into flames. When last seen the coastal defence vessel was burning fiercely from stem to stern and was down by the bows." Shore batteries joined in the action as our ships disengaged, but without effect. Later our ships attacked two small supply vessels escorted by five R-boats and one of the supply ships was torpedoed and blew up. Our losses were slight.

The next action was in the Straits of Dover. A convoy strongly escorted by R-boats which was attempting to pass during the moonless period of the night of March 14-15 was intercepted by light forces commanded by Lieut.-Commander H. O. Bradford. Our ships engaged immediately and sank a small supply ship. Another and two R-boats were damaged, and in a later stage of the action another R-boat was repeatedly hit. We suffered neither casualties nor damage. Further actions in the narrow seas followed. Two were fought on the night of March 15-16.

In one, aircraft of Coastal Command sighted and attacked a number of E-boats attempting to approach our coasts over the waters between Ushant and Land's End. They reported the enemy's position and early in the morning of March 16 "light naval forces" made contact with the E-boats about 25 miles south-west of Land's End. In the "short but sharp action" which, followed, one E-boat was believed to have been sunk and others were damaged, two severely, before they made their escape. Neither our ships nor our aircraft suffered loss or damage.

The other action was fought in the Straits of Dover where our light forces on patrol encountered "an enemy force of greatly superior strength consisting of six heavily armed trawlers and six R-boats. The Board of Admiralty

regret to announce that during the fierce gun action which followed, one of our M.T.B.s came under the concentrated fire of the enemy force and must be considered to have been lost." Another of our ships, pressing home the attack, scored repeated hits on an R-boat which blew up and sank. One of the German trawlers was severely damaged.

On March 29 the Admiralty recorded two more actions in the narrow seas. Early that morning Lieut.-Commander H. O. Bradford's light naval force, while carrying out an offensive sweep off Ymuiden, encountered and attacked a convoy escorted by R-boats, several of which were damaged. Other light coastal forces led by Lieut.-Commander I. D. Lyle

"penetrated to within two miles of Dieppe and attacked a convoy of three small enemy ships . . . escorted by four R-boats and an escort ship of medium size. In the course of this action at least one R-boat was extensively damaged. Later a heavy explosion was heard . . . from the direction of the convoy. All His Majesty's ships returned safely having suffered a number of casualties. . . ."

Aircraft of Coastal Command made several successful attacks by day and night on enemy shipping off the coast of France, the Low Countries, Denmark and Norway. A particularly successful operation was the torpedoing by Beaufighters of the strongly escorted former liner *Monte Rosa*, of 14,000 tons, off the Norwegian coast on the night of March 30. Two German armed coastal ships were destroyed by Albacores off the Cherbourg Peninsula before dawn on March 3. Excellent work was done by our escort carriers and the pilots of the aircraft which they carried. The *Biter* and *Pursuer* were specially mentioned during the quarter, but all these vessels, of which the Navy, in the First Lord's words, now possessed "tens," did most valuable service in reconnaissance and in keeping off hostile aircraft as well as the U-boats, which were their special quarry.

In his speech introducing the Navy Estimates in Parliament on March 7 Mr. Alexander began with an account of the campaign against the U-boats during the past year.

The sinkings of merchantmen by U-boats during 1943 had been little more than half the Admiralty's estimate. In 1941 one ship in every 181 had been lost in the main Atlantic and United Kingdom coastal convoys ; in 1942 the proportion had been one in 233 ; in 1943 one out of every 344 and in the second half of the year losses had been under 1 per 1,000. The

change had been due to several causes. Great credit was due to our scientists and technicians, but there were other reasons, and it would be right to give prominence to the "growth and efficiency of Coastal Command, the ability of its commanders and its excellent co-operation with the Navy." A no less important cause of this turn in our fortunes was the skill and leadership of the senior officers of our escort groups. Naval actions round slow-moving convoys were long-drawn-out affairs imposing great strain on the officers and crews of the escorts and also on those on board the merchant vessels. Our force of surface escorts was increasing; the American forces had similarly expanded, and we were much indebted to America for many of our "very-long-range aircraft" and for a high proportion of our escort ships.

This growth in numbers had enabled us to form special groups of escort ships to reinforce the escorts of threatened convoys. We had also been able to take the offensive in the Bay of Biscay. This offensive had been mainly conducted by Coastal Command aircraft aided by some American air squadrons and by British, Canadian and American surface ships. As an example of what could be achieved by intensive training, team work and skilled leadership, he instanced the work of the Second Escort Group under Captain F. J. Walker, which had made 17 kills, the Third British Escort Group commanded through most of its service by Commander A. A. Tait, who had been killed in action recently, and the Seventh British Escort Group under Commander P. W. Gretton. The headquarters principally responsible for the training, development, organization and operation of our anti-U-boat forces was the Western Approaches Command, under Admiral Sir Max Horton, himself an old and distinguished submarine officer.

A special scheme had been in force for some time to enable merchantmen to eliminate funnel smoke and thus reduce their chances of being detected. Over 600 sets of the necessary equipment had been delivered and firemen were being trained on a large scale in the best methods of stoking. Losses had been further reduced by improved navigational aids. But no one should think that any relaxation was possible. The enemy had provided his submarines with more powerful A.A. armament, and had brought the new acoustic torpedo into service, and the building of new concrete shelters in the German operational bases suggested that Admiral Donitz hoped to bring more U-boats into action. We must also expect more U-boat activity in distant seas, such as the Indian Ocean.¹

After paying a warm tribute to the navies of the Dominions, of India and of all our allies, and to the self-denying devotion and skill of every branch of the Royal Navy, Mr. Alexander dealt with production and repairs. Our output of warships was only slightly less at the end of January than that during the whole of the last war, and the output of merchant ships at the end of the year appreciably exceeded the total output for that war. Government assistance to the shipyards in the form of improved equipment and better layout had begun to bring its reward. The use of welding had been expanded. The greatest advance, perhaps, had been in the field of pre-fabrication and pre-assembly. In the most recent class of frigates at least 80 per cent of the structure had been pre-fabricated.

The improved system of direct promotion from the lower deck to permanent commissions had been more than maintained. This also applied to the Fleet Air Arm and the Accountants Branch. Special attention had been devoted to the arrangements for selecting and training temporary reserve officers.

¹ Cf. Chapter V, Section 1.

Reviewing the situation at sea as a whole, the First Lord said that the Fleet was now stronger in relation to enemy naval strength than it had been since the fall of France. In the Atlantic the war had taken a favourable turn. In the Pacific the U.S. naval forces aided by the Dominions were breaking through the outer Japanese defences at a speed beyond expectation a year ago, and they were waging a successful war of attrition against the Japanese Navy and mercantile marine.

In Far Northern waters the naval situation had also improved and we continued to deliver great quantities of war material, machinery, railway material and stores to the Russian Government. Some 13 British warships had been sunk on this duty and the losses of merchant ships of many Allied nations had at times been heavy. Nevertheless, over 88 per cent of the cargoes consigned had got through. Conversely the Axis hopes of limited but valuable trade with Japan had been largely extinguished.

While devoting our immediate endeavours to preparations for further operations in Europe, we looked beyond them to the time when we should descend with our full might upon the Japanese. The services of the Navy would be needed more acutely, owing to the great distances to be covered, and probably in as great or nearly as great strength as hitherto. All or most steps in the Far Eastern campaigns to come would be or would begin as "fundamentally maritime operations." The fight with this other island sea power would once more demonstrate that "the ultimate sanction and final arbiter of sea mastery is still the battle fleet, supported . . . by the air element, which is now inseparably part . . . of maritime dominion. The responsibilities resting on the Navy will be enormous, but the merit and glory of the task still greater."

NOTE.—The First Lord's references to the operations of the Navy in the Mediterranean have been referred to in Chapter II.

2 : THE ALLIED AIR OFFENSIVE

During the first three months of 1944 the Allied air offensive against Germany in the West increased in intensity and weight. Before the end of March the strength of the United States Air Force massed in Great Britain had passed that of the R.A.F. and the Dominion and Allied air contingents operationally under its orders in this country : and the R.A.F. had by then equalled or somewhat exceeded the Luftwaffe in strength. The attack on Germany and on important centres of German war production in France and the Low Countries was pursued with equal vigour by day and night, with remarkably little interruption from unfavourable weather. Allied losses were sometimes heavy, even for the number of aircraft engaged, at other times extraordinarily light ; and the extension of the radius of action of the newer type of fighters enabled the Allies to exact a heavier price

for their own lost crews and machines. Moreover, the Germans, frequently as they varied their defensive tactics and boldly as they often attacked the powerfully armed American heavy bombers by day, were unable to discover any tactical or technical device that could be relied upon to protect their attacking fighters from the terrifically heavy fire of the Liberators and Flying Fortresses. Facing these they were exposed to risks analogous to those faced by destroyers attacking battleships by day. Their targets, it is true, were more vulnerable than capital ships, but a destroyer could take infinitely more punishment than any fighter aeroplane. As in previous volumes of this record, the author must confine himself in this section to no more than an outline of the principal aerial operations of this quarter. The immense number of "sorties" flown by the R.A.F. and the Allied and Dominion squadrons associated with it and by the American Army Air Force in Britain daily would defy enumeration and still more description in any but an official history. The chronicler can but record such of the chief events of the air war as the public was permitted to know, leaving it to others to fill in the details with fuller knowledge at a later date. In this record the losses of British and Allied aircraft during attacks on Germany and German-occupied territories are given in brackets; but the reader will, I trust, realize that on nights and days when several targets had been attacked the official returns of losses were sometimes collective and did not differentiate between those incurred in, say, a raid on the Ruhr and in extensive mine-laying off the Danish coast. German raids on Great Britain are treated separately in the later part of this section.

The R.A.F. began the year with two heavy night attacks on Berlin on January 1-2 and 2-3 (55). In the second of these attacks about 2,000 tons of bombs were dropped and, in each, subsidiary attacks, in which Hamburg and Mannheim suffered, were carried out simultaneously with the main operation. After this "lead-off" the R.A.F. made more than a dozen attacks on the Reich on the largest scale during January. A summary

of the reports published by the Air Ministry during the month gives the following record :

After the raids on Berlin the R.A.F. attacked Stettin in great strength on January 5, dropping over 1,000 tons of H.E. and incendiary bombs (15). Unfavourable weather prevented major air attacks by night until January 14 when 2,000 tons were dropped by a very powerful force of heavy bombers in 23 minutes. Targets in Berlin, Magdeburg and in France were also bombed for a total loss of 38 machines. The main weight of the attack was directed against Berlin in the following week. On January 20 the heaviest force of four-engined bombers that had yet been sent to Berlin dropped 2,300 tons in half an hour (35). On the following night objectives in France were raided and Berlin was again bombed, but the principal attack fell on Magdeburg where over 2,000 tons were dropped (52 for all attacks). On January 27 our squadrons struck Berlin again and they combined this attack with raids on several points in western Germany and northern France and on the fortified island of Heligoland, where they claimed to have done much damage. On January 28 a heavy raid on Berlin, the sixth major attack in the month on the German capital, was combined with minor attacks on various points in north-western Germany and extensive mine-laying operations (45). The last raid of the month on Berlin (January 30) was combined with attacks on other objectives in central and western Germany (33). This combination of minor with major attacks had by now become part of our offensive tactics. It was designed to "keep the enemy guessing" the real objective of the night's attack until the last possible moment and to induce him to dispatch night fighters to points where a subsidiary operation had been opened and thus weaken his defence against our heaviest and most dangerous strokes. In addition to these large-scale attacks, Mosquitoes raided as far east as Berlin on several nights besides making frequent attacks on Ruhr and Rhineland targets. Few of these small, fast and manœuvrable bombers were lost.

Of these targets, Magdeburg suffered its first heavy attack. It was the 22nd of Germany's large industrial towns to be "blitzed," and its importance to the German war effort demanded the attention of the R.A.F. The Aeronautical Correspondent of *The Times* wrote :

"For its size—the population is 320,000—Magdeburg has a great number of vital war industries, and its importance as a heavy engineering centre has been increased by reason of the severe damage caused to Krupps at Essen. In addition to a branch of Krupps, Magdeburg has factories making Junkers aero engines, tanks, armoured cars, guns, ammunition, mines and torpedoes, explosives and synthetic oil. It is also one of the principal railway and canal centres in central Germany" (*loc. cit.* January 24).

The day attacks on Germany and enemy-occupied territories in Western Europe were on a larger scale than in any preceding month. The American heavy bombers bore the brunt of them. They suffered heavy losses on occasion, but they inflicted enormous damage on the

enemy's war industries and shot down a great number of his aircraft. They were escorted far into the Reich by Lightnings and Thunderbolts. Lighter British and American bombers with fighter-bombers and most powerful fighter escorts made many heavy raids on France and struck into the Low Countries. The following were the major day attacks reported by the Air Ministry and U.S. Headquarters in this country during the first month of the quarter :

On January 4 military objectives in the coastal areas of northern France were subjected to the heaviest day's attack yet experienced in this area. By noon nearly 450 bombers and 300 fighters had crossed the Channel, and in the afternoon about 500 more were engaged. The opening operation, when over 200 American-manned Marauders made their sixth consecutive attack on unspecified targets in the Pas de Calais, involved no loss, and the entire series of sorties only cost seven machines.

On the same day U.S. Flying Fortresses and Liberators attacked Kiel and made subsidiary attacks on Münster and other targets (21). During their attack Typhoons flown by British, Allied and Dominion pilots carried out a diversionary sweep over the Low Countries, destroying five Do217s in its course. The heavy bombers and their escort claimed 17 victims. On January 5 the American heavies renewed their attack on Kiel and targets in western Germany and they also raided Tours and Bordeaux. A joint Anglo-American announcement said *inter alia* :

"Some of the bomber groups met heavy opposition and 62 enemy fighters were destroyed.¹ . . . The bombers were escorted to the targets by U.S. fighters on all missions except the Bordeaux attack, and were given withdrawal support by U.S., R.A.F., Dominion, and Allied fighters. The fighters destroyed 33 enemy aircraft." The announcement gave our losses as 25 bombers and 12 fighters.

On January 7 U.S. bombers attacked south-west Germany (12 bombers and 7 fighters) and claimed the destruction of 42 German fighters. Meanwhile, the R.A.F. bombed Maupertus airfield, objectives in the Cherbourg Peninsula and other French targets, losing but three machines out of about 750 engaged. But the great daylight attack of the month came on January 11, when over 700 Flying Fortresses and Liberators escorted by 500 fighters raided the aircraft factories at Aschersleben, Brunswick and Halberstadt. Machine shops at the first of these towns were hit, the main assembly buildings producing Merros at Brunswick were heavily bombed and two out of three were destroyed, and a Ju88 and Ju188 component plant at Halberstadt was "heavily hit." Opposition was intense and air battles lasted over three hours. The Americans' loss was 64 machines—59 of them bombers. They claimed the destruction of 152 German aeroplanes. General Arnold, chief of the U.S.A.A.F., said at Wichita, Kansas, on January 12 that the battle had been "one of the hardest blows yet struck against the German Air Force." At a cost of approximately 5 per cent of the attacking force, production at these three plants had been wiped out altogether and months must elapse before the damage could be repaired and the production of fighter planes resumed.

¹ By the heavy bombers. The total German fighter loss was 95.

On January 14 great numbers of U.S.A.A.F. and R.A.F. bombers, from heavy to light, with fighter-bombers and fighters, American, British, Dominion and Allied, escorting them, attacked airfields and other targets in northern France as far as the Paris area (16). They had many encounters with hostile aircraft and claimed 27. Another large-scale attack was made on the Pas de Calais area (13) on January 21, when 19 enemy aircraft were destroyed. On January 24 an all-American force of escorted "heavies" attacked targets in western Germany and was given withdrawal cover by R.A.F., Allied and Dominion aircraft as before. Thirteen bombers and fighters were lost against 21 German fighters. IJmuiden steel works and targets in Belgium were attacked on January 27 by a small force of R.A.F. Typhoon fighter-bombers and Typhoon fighters, and R.C.A.F. Mosquitoes and R.A.F. Typhoons attacked targets in France and Belgium that afternoon. Ten German fighters were destroyed without loss.

There were heavy daylight attacks during the last three days of January. On the 29th some 1,500 U.S. aircraft took part in an operation in which an attack by over 800 heavy bombers on Frankfurt (44) was the main theme. The new long-range Mustangs escorted the bombers all the way to their objective and the R.A.F. provided cover for their withdrawal. "Blind bombing" methods were used, since Frankfurt was covered with cloud, but this did not prevent the German fighters coming up in force, including many which fired rockets, and *flak* was intense. The attackers claimed 102 fighters, of which 60 fell to the heavy bombers. On January 30 "very large formations of heavy bombers of the U.S. Strategic Air Force in Europe" attacked aeroplane factories at Brunswick and industrial installations and railway yards at Hanover. They claimed 91 German fighters against a loss of 25 from all the day's operations, which included attacks on airfields in Brittany and shipping off Jersey. On January 31 military objectives in the Pas de Calais and the airfield at Gilze-Rijen in Holland were the targets. Thirteen German and nine Allied machines were destroyed.

February is usually an unfavourable month for aerial operations, and the first half of the month saw few night attacks on Germany, though the offensive by day was effectively maintained and indeed strengthened. A small force of the R.A.F. bombed Limoges aircraft works in south-west France on February 8 and on February 13 Bomber Command attacked objectives in western Germany and southern France.

Before the week of continuous attack, which will be recorded presently, the 8th U.S.A.A.F. had been active. Wilhelmshaven was its target on February 3 when 1,100 bombers and fighters attacked, while American, R.A.F., Dominion and Dutch and other Allied aircraft attacked many military objectives in northern France. Few fighters were up at Wilhelmshaven and icy weather was our pilots' chief enemy. The day cost the Allies 15 machines and the Germans nine. On February 4 a heavy daylight attack on Frankfurt (22) encountered weak opposition and destroyed 12 enemy aircraft; on February 5 and 6 heavy and medium bombers with abundant American, British and Allied support concentrated their attack on German airfields in northern France (23) and with the fighters claimed a total of 64 German machines. Fortresses bombed Frankfurt (25) on February 8 when lighter Allied aircraft attacked in France. The day cost the Germans 21 fighters. On February 10 Brunswick had its third attack within a month (37). German fighters came up in force and in a series of fights lasting three hours 84 were shot down, 55 of them by American Mustangs, Thunderbolts and Lightnings. Attacks chiefly directed against hostile airfields in France cost the R.A.F. three aircraft and the *Luftwaffe* six. On February 11 Frankfurt was heavily bombed (20) and 37 German fighters met their end here or during diversionary sweeps over France.

On the night of February 15 "the largest force of R.A.F. bombers which has so far attacked Berlin" dropped the heaviest bomb load yet carried, 2,500 tons, between 9.15 p.m. and 9.45 p.m. Immense damage was done, huge fires were started and Mosquitoes following up the attack harassed the German fire brigades. There was less fighter opposition than had been anticipated, owing, perhaps, to a feint attack on Frankfurt-on-Oder which may have drawn part of the defence eastwards. We lost 43 machines. Four days later began a week's night and day offensive, the opening of which was thus summarized by *The Bulletin of International News*.¹

"February 19 night, Leipzig bombed—over 2,300 tons—Berlin, and places in west Germany, Holland and France also raided (79). February 20, Leipzig, Gotha, Bernburg, Brunswick, Gutow, Aschersleben and Rostock bombed by U.S. heavies, and 126 German aeroplanes destroyed. Twenty-one bombers and three fighters lost out of some 2,000 in all, including fighter escorts. February 20, night, Stuttgart bombed—over 2,000 tons—and Munich (10), and places in France bombed by Mosquitoes. February 21, north-west Germany bombed by nearly 2,000 aeroplanes (20) and 51 enemy fighters destroyed. Targets included Brunswick, Hanover, Diepholz, Bramsche, Lingen, Ahlhorn, etc. Mosquitoes attacked French airfields and Coxyde airfield. February 21 night, French and German targets attacked by Mosquitoes (1)."

"February 22, Bernburg, Regensburg, Aschersleben, Peterhausen and Halberstadt, and airfields in Germany bombed from both the United Kingdom and Italy by day, and 133 German aeroplanes destroyed . . . for the loss of 56 U.S. bombers and 11 fighters. Mosquitoes also attacked France and Marauders bombed Gilze-Rijen airfield. February 23, Steyr aircraft factory in Austria bombed by B24s from Italy, while the 8th U.S.A.A.F. in great strength attacked "with excellent results" the Messerschmitt twin-engine fighter assembly and airframe component factories at Gotha and the ball-and-roller bearing factories at Schweinfurt, in Germany. . . . This full-scale assault by bomber divisions marked the fourth day this week that the major offensive has been continued against aircraft factories and related industries by the largest number of aircraft ever dispatched against the Reich." The Allied loss was 59 machines, while 156 German

¹ B.I.N., xxi, No. 4, pp. 188-89.

fighters were claimed, 83 by the bombers. Airfields in Holland and targets in north-west France were also attacked by the largest force of Marauders yet sent out, of which none were lost. About 250 medium bombers were engaged in the last operation. Other attacks were made on targets in northern France by Mitchells, Bostons and fighter-bombers with Typhoon escorts. On February 24 the R.A.F. delivered two heavy night attacks on Schweinfurt and also raided targets in north-western Germany (35).

On February 25 the two-way assault on Germany continued. "Heavy bombers of the 8th A.A.F. in very great strength attacked the Messerschmitt assembly factory and the major airframe components factory at Regensburg; the ball-bearing works at Stuttgart; the Messerschmitt assembly centre and experimental station at Augsburg; and the major airframe component factory at Furth. Bombing results were good. The 15th A.A.F. from Italy joined in the attack on the factories at Regensburg in the third co-ordinated assault in four days against Germany from the west and south, under the direction of the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe. The bombers were escorted and supported by large forces of 8th A.A.F. fighters as well as 9th A.A.F., R.A.F., Dominion and Allied fighters of the Allied Expeditionary Force."

The Americans claimed the destruction of 142 enemy machines in air combats and many were reported damaged on the ground. The Allied loss was 70 machines, including 65 bombers. There were also minor operations over France and Holland wherein we lost five and destroyed six aeroplanes. That night aircraft of Bomber Command in great strength attacked Augsburg twice (24) dropping 1,700 tons on enemy factories.

The week's offensive operations had done immense damage to 18 important centres of German aircraft production. Several factories had been completely wrecked, and since the raid on Leipzig on February 19 over 18,000 tons of bombs and incendiaries had been dropped on German targets. Allied losses were 148 R.A.F. machines, 232 U.S. bombers and 37 U.S. fighters. The enemy's loss of machines in air fighting was estimated at 641. It was stated in apparently well-informed quarters in London that since the New Year Germany had lost 80 per cent of her two-engine fighter production capacity and 60 per cent of that of one-engine fighters, a quarter of her heavy bomber production and three-fifths of the production of transport aircraft.¹ These estimates were, perhaps, rather too optimistic, and the public, for reasons which will be given later in this chapter, was inclined to be somewhat sceptical as to the completeness of the destruction caused. But the marked decline of German air activity on every battle front which became manifest late in March showed that the enemy had been compelled

¹ *B.I.N.*, xxi, No. 5, p. 189.

to husband his machines, and this was probably due mainly to the effects of our raids.

March opened with an R.A.F. attack on the night of March 1 on Stuttgart (4), and the results were believed to have been excellent in spite of thick cloud. Our loss in a force of 600 bombers was surprisingly low. For the next week Mosquitoes attacked many localities in Germany (including Berlin) by night, but the heaviest attacks until March 15 were directed against targets in France, Meulan-les-Mureaux and Albert aircraft factories on March 3 (when the attackers used 12,000-lb. bombs), Trappes and Le Mans railway yards on March 6 and 7 respectively; Marignane aircraft factory at Marseilles on March 9, and aircraft plants at Clermont-Ferrand and elsewhere in Central France on March 10. This series of attacks cost us but one machine. The R.A.F. struck Stuttgart (40) on March 15, dropping over 3,000 tons of bombs. Next came the turn of the Michelin factories at Clermont-Ferrand on March 16, when much damage was caused by 12,000-lb. bombs and no bomber was lost. On March 18 the R.A.F. attacked Frankfurt, dropping bombs at the rate of 50 tons a minute, and the Bergerac explosives plant near Bordeaux (22). Angoulême explosives factory was bombed without loss on March 20, but 33 bombers did not return from Frankfurt on the night of March 22 when more than 1,000 R.A.F. machines dropped over 3,000 tons in 30 minutes. On March 23 there were relatively minor raids on targets at Laon, Lille and Dortmund (2). Berlin and Kiel were attacked on March 24 when over 1,000 British heavy bombers dropped over 2,500 tons on industrial areas of the capital. Our loss was heavy—73 machines. On March 26 the R.A.F. revisited Essen, where repaired factories were bombed before they could come into production again, and Hanover with other localities. Of some 900 bombers engaged but 9 were lost. Mosquitoes continued to sting Germany by night and several railway junctions in France, e.g. Creil, Lyons and Le Mans, were raided.

The last large-scale night operation of the quarter was unhappily costly. Aircraft of Bomber Command attacked Germany with Nuremberg as their chief objective. Ninety-four of our aircraft were missing, apparently nearly 10 per cent of the attacking force. The Aeronautical Correspondent of *The Times* commented: "A long flight involving a deep penetration of the enemy's defences, a clear moonlit sky with icy clouds below, and desperate opposition from the strongest force of German fighters yet sent up at night, all combined to inflict on the R.A.F. their heaviest loss to date." He added that there was a special reason for the fury of the resistance which began when the R.A.F. squadrons crossed the French coast and lasted for three hours, forcing the bombers "to shoot their way through."

Nuremberg, apart from being an important railway junction and the home of a variety of war industries, contains the big Siemens-Schuckert works. The series of powerful blows directed by the R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. against Berlin has caused severe damage to the enemy's electrical industry, of which Berlin is the centre. The main Siemens works in Berlin was among the most severely battered factories, and it is believed that electrical equipment is rapidly becoming a bottleneck.

Air operations by day made up a formidable total of sorties during March. It is only possible here to give a list of the principal operations and to remind the reader that concurrently with these, British, American, Allied and Dominion units were attacking airfields in occupied territory, traffic on canals and roads, shipping, railways and railway yards. The following summary is derived partly from official bulletins and partly from the account given by *B.I.N.*, vol. xxi, pp. 225, 266 and 267.

The daylight offensive in March opened with heavy attacks on targets in south-western Germany and the Chartres airfield (14) in which 18 German fighters were destroyed. Objectives in north-west Germany were attacked next day (16) and eight German machines were felled. The first attack by the U.S. heavy bombers on Berlin by day came on March 4. It cost the attack 37 machines against 15 German fighters. Next day airfields in south-west France were raided (9) and 14 German machines attempting interception were brought down by the fighter escort. The second large-scale daylight attack on Berlin was delivered on March 6 (68) when 176 German machines were brought down, 93 of them by the bombers. Factories, airfields and military installations "in the metropolitan area of Berlin" were officially described as the targets and the results were said to have been good, though some bombs "were dropped through over-cast." R.A.F. Mustangs were among the escorting fighters. The next

raid on Berlin came on March 8. On that occasion "the ball-bearing factory at Erkner, a suburb of Berlin, was hit with good results," and other industrial and military targets were bombed. Enemy fighters made persistent attempts to break up the heavy bomber formations, but were defeated by "our very strong fighter escort," which accounted for 83 enemy aircraft out of 125 shot down. The Allies lost 53 machines, of which 38 were heavy bombers.

Next day "strong forces of Flying Fortresses and Liberators" of the 8th U.S.A.A.F. attacked industrial Berlin again but this time they encountered scarcely any German aircraft. The weather was cloudy but "targets were bombed through overcast by means of scientific instruments." Only eight U.S. machines failed to return. The next heavy daylight attack was made on Münster on March 11 when the attackers were compelled by thick weather to bomb through cloud, and no German fighters intervened. No bombers were lost and only four fighters in operations over northern France. In addition medium bombers made numerous attacks during the first ten days of March on targets in the Pas de Calais and elsewhere in northern France.¹

On March 15 Brunswick was again attacked (8) and 36 German aircraft were shot down. On March 16 industrial targets in south Germany, stated by the enemy to be Ulm and Augsburg, were heavily bombed, again "by the use of instruments" owing to cloudy weather. The Americans, attacking in "very great strength," lost 35 machines, but 125 fighters were shot down during many obstinate attacks on the bombers and their escorts, American, British and Allied. Next day the 15th U.S.A.A.F. operating from Italy attacked Vienna in cloudy weather when no fighters were seen. On March 18 Augsburg, Friedrichshafen, Lechfeld, Landsberg and other places in south Germany were attacked in strength, against very heavy opposition. Between 1,500 and 2,000 aircraft were employed in this great operation wherein 43 bombers and ten fighters were lost and the destruction of 82 German machines was claimed. Aircraft factories and airfields were the chief targets. Sixteen American aircraft landed or crashed in north-east Switzerland and the surviving crews were interned.

Frankfurt was the target on March 20 (14) when cloud prevented the results of the bombing from being observed. On March 22 Berlin's turn came again and a powerful force of American heavy bombers made the fifth American attack on it in 19 days. No aircraft attempted to intercept but the A.A. fire was "intense." Nine fighters and 13 bombers did not return. On March 23 Liberators and Flying Fortresses "bombed Germany's biggest railroad yards at Hamm, a *Luftwaffe* station at Achmer, a bomber base at Handorf, a war factory at Munster and industrial targets at the Messerschmitt production centre at Brunswick." All targets except Brunswick were bombed visually with good results. The attack cost the Allies 33 machines. The enemy lost 61 fighters in counter-attacks which were sometimes heavy. On the 24th Schweinfurt and Frankfurt were again bombed as were enemy airfields at St. Dizier and Nancy in France (8). A reconnaissance over Frankfurt on March 25 reported fires still burning 60 hours after the last night attack and 30 hours after the day

¹ It was rumoured that the damage done in these long-continued attacks on certain mysterious military objectives had made it impossible for the Germans to open the long-range bombardment of London by rocket-guns which they were alleged to have been preparing. Certainly no such attack by rocket-gun was made on any part of southern England during the quarter.

attack, and the virtual destruction of the whole of the commercial and administrative part of the city. On March 29 Fortresses raided Brunswick (18), the fifteenth American attack on the Reich during the month. The American fighter escort alone claimed 39 German fighters shot down in combat above the target. .

Many heavy attacks were also made by American and British medium and light bombers and fighter-bombers, sometimes supported by Fortresses and Liberators, and provided with powerful escorts of fighters, on a great variety of targets in France and the Low Countries. Outstanding operations were the raids on airfields all over northern and central France on March 21 when 11 German aircraft were destroyed in air combats and others wrecked on the ground, for the loss of seven Allied machines; the attacks of March 26 on the IJmuiden U-boat base and E-boat nests and a great number of coastal targets, airfields, *flak* towers and military installations; and a wide-ranging sweep of bombers and fighters ranging from Tours to Pau and Biarritz in south-western France on March 27 (21) when at least 38 German aeroplanes were destroyed.

Before dealing with the effects and probable consequences of this mighty attack, on which opinion was somewhat more divided than a study of the Press might lead a reader to believe, it is necessary to give a summary of the Air Minister's annual survey of the work of the R.A.F. Presenting the Air Estimates in Parliament, Sir Archibald Sinclair began by paying tribute to the Allied air squadrons and those of the British Dominions and also to the British people for the patience and cheerfulness with which they had submitted to the conversion of their land into a great air base. After a reference to this "most gigantic civil engineering and building programme ever undertaken in this country," which involved the erection of a million buildings and the construction of concrete tracks "equivalent to a 30-foot road running from here to Pekin," and complimenting Air Chief Marshal Courtney and Mr. Holloway, the Director-General of Works, and the staffs, contractors and workmen who had almost completed it, he turned to the question of training. The accident rate had fallen remarkably during the last two years.

Training was the secret of air safety and Air Marshal Garrod and his successor, Air Marshal Drummond, and their training staffs and the two great Training Commands of the R.A.F. at home and in the Dominions might be proud of their work. He also spoke highly of the increasing efficiency and value of our expanding Transport Command.

From this he turned to the maritime war against the U-boats. The enemy had sprung surprises but we had sprung more on him, and his efforts to keep aircraft beyond effective bombing range by strengthening

his A.A. fire had failed. In operating against surface shipping Coastal Command had had a year of "extended activity and considerable success." They had given careful attention to German coastal traffic, particularly the route from the Norwegian iron mines to the Rhine ports, and between them the Beaufighters of Coastal Command and its sea-mining aircraft had sunk "quite a proportion" of that traffic. After a reference to the Mediterranean campaign which he described as "the chief testing-ground for our methods of combining air and surface forces in one great instrument of war" he turned to our dispositions for the coming invasion. Fighter Command and Army Co-operation Command had been combined with the 9th American Air Force into a new organization described as the Allied Expeditionary Air Force under Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory. On the other hand, a force entitled the Air Defence of Great Britain would be responsible for day and night defence at home.

The new "blitz" was not easy to counter since each German raider spent probably only 20 minutes over this country. He would not boast that the defences could ward off any attack as Göring had boasted; he could say that we had foreseen the attack and were ready to pit our forces against it. He did not seek to minimize the loss and suffering that these raids had caused; it was no consolation to a family that had suffered to be told that these attacks had no military significance. But we had inflicted heavier casualties on the raiders in proportion to their strength than the enemy had inflicted on the infinitely greater forces which we had sent against Germany. In the end, nevertheless, the best protection for our homes was to increase the weight of our attack on Germany. The historian might look upon the period between the February and March moons as one of the decisive stages of the war. As the Germans retreated in the east they had been compelled to tie down four-fifths of their fighter strength to defend their factories. That turning of the course of land battles fought hundreds of miles away was the true strategic employment of air power.

The extraordinary achievements of the R.A.F. were due not only to the present numerical strength of our Bomber Command but also to the development of navigational aids and safety devices. The introduction of the Pathfinder squadrons and the brilliant conduct of their operations had greatly increased the effectiveness of the offensive. The Air Minister then turned to effects of the attack and gave particulars of the chief war industrial centres which we had attacked, and a partial catalogue of the factories destroyed. He said in warning that "the wounded tiger" was still dangerous, and that the enemy, some of whose efforts in repair had been "really remarkable," would do his utmost to recover the ground he had lost. But there lay before us, now clearly obtainable, the glittering prize of air supremacy, the talisman that could paralyse German war industry and war transport. That would clear the road for the progress of the Allied armies to Berlin.

An analysis of photographs of Berlin which had been subjected to expert analysis by the R.A.F. certainly gave impression that immense damage had been done to the German war effort. These photographs covered the period from November 18, when the intensified Battle of Berlin opened, to February 18. Of the 103 Berlin factories ranked by the Ministry of Economic Warfare as of the

most important class 44 had been hit, 29 of these heavily. The Aeronautical Correspondent of *The Times* wrote :

"The five most important plants hit are the Rheinmetall-Borsig armament and engineering plant, employing 25,000 workers, including Alkett, which was regarded as the most important tank factory in the Reich ; Siemens Kabelwerke, the A.E.G. cable works, Siemens and Halske A.G., one of the enemy's most important manufacturers of electrical apparatus, and Accumulatoren Fabrik A.G. Rheinmetall-Borsig which had assumed an even greater importance because of the severe damage done to Krupps. Of the other important factories destroyed or very seriously damaged, 12 come within category 1 (defined as major plants engaged in war industries), six in priority 2 (factories of slightly less importance engaged in major industries or major plants engaged in less important industries) ; and seven in priority 3 (important subsidiary factories in war or major industries). Less severely damaged are four in priority 1, six in priority 2 and four in priority 3" (*loc. cit.* March 24).

Many other industrial cities suffered terribly. Thus Bomber Command's attacks on Stuttgart on February 20 and March 1 had damaged nine key factories very seriously and three less severely. Thirty-two other factories had been hit. The most important industrial plant in the city, the Robert Bosch works, which produced ignition equipment for all kinds of aero engines had several of its large workshops destroyed and the headquarters factory of the important Daimler Benz firm had been seriously damaged.

At the same time the policy of "area bombing" to which the R.A.F. was apparently committed incurred some criticism either on the ground that it was inhuman or that it did not give the results claimed for it by the Air Ministry. In the House of Lords on February 9 the Bishop of Chichester challenged the Government's policy. He said that he fully realized that the enemy had begun the large-scale bombing of cities and he recognized the legitimacy of concentrated attack on industrial and military objectives and that such attacks involved the killing of civilians. But he asked whether the obliteration of whole towns because they contained military or industrial objectives was a justifiable act of war.

Of Berlin he said :

"Up to date half Berlin has been destroyed, area by area, the residential and the industrial portion alike. . . . It is said that 74,000 persons have been killed and that 3,000,000 are homeless. The policy is obliteration, openly acknowledged. That is not a justifiable act of war." Berlin, the Bishop added, was one of the great centres of art collections in the world. It had a large collection of Oriental and classical sculpture, one of the best picture galleries in Europe, a gallery of modern art better than the Tate, a museum of ethnology without parallel in this country and one of the biggest and best organized libraries—State and university . . .—in the world. Almost all these non-industrial and non-military buildings were grouped near the old

Palace and Unter den Linden. The whole of that street had been demolished. Did their Lordships realize the educational loss involved in such destruction?

The adoption of area bombing in the spring of 1942 had led to systematic destruction. "The point I want to bring home, because I doubt whether it is sufficiently realized, is that it is no longer definite military and industrial objectives which are the aim of the bombers, but the whole town area by area is plotted carefully out. . . ." He asked how the bombers could aim at more than a great space when they were bombing by night through cloud. He questioned whether this policy had either injured German production so seriously as had been claimed or had weakened the German will to fight. Indeed there was evidence that the desperation which it caused had spread the idea that Germany had everything to lose by surrender.

Lord Lang of Lambeth, who also spoke, said that he felt bound to say that the recent attacks on Hamburg and Berlin seemed to him to go a long way beyond what had been declared to be the policy of the Government and the High Command. He added :

"It is one thing to accept the destruction of military objectives and their immediate neighbourhood as a regrettable military necessity ; it is quite another to exult in it . . . and to regard it as something worthy of almost jubilant congratulations." The effect of this on the moral outlook of the people could not be good and though the *lex talionis* was one of the oldest human instincts, there must be some real moral deterioration in the indulgence of this temper, stimulated by the headlines of the popular Press and sometimes by announcements on the wireless.

Replying for the Government, Lord Cranborne claimed that the intensive bombing of German industrial cities was a method and a most efficient method of shortening the war and of thus abridging the fearful sufferings of the nations who were undergoing intolerable anguish at the hands of the armies of the Axis. The only way to end these horrors was to beat the enemy quickly and restore enduring peace. The Government would not abate their bombing policy but would continue it against "proper and suitable targets."¹

On the subject of "area bombing," Captain Cyril Falls observed that to-day's methods of warfare marked in general "a retrogression in humanity from those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries." We had taken up strategic bombing because at the time we had no other means of reaching Germany and since day bombing seemed out of the question bombing had to be carried out

¹The preceding extracts and summaries are based upon Hansard, House of Lords, Vol. 130, No. 20.

at night. Little did earlier critics of the American theory of day bombing realize that in the concluding phases of the war the Fortress would prove at least as valuable as the Lancaster and perhaps more so. When the improved armament of our land forces and the change in Russia offered us alternative forms of action, the advocates of strategic bombing again had their way until to-day, as Sir James Grigg had revealed when speaking on the Army Estimates.

"We have reached the extraordinary situation in which the labour devoted to the production of heavy bombers alone is believed to be equal to that allotted to the production of the whole equipment of the Army," with the result that the Army had been prevented from expanding or had had to take the second best because the best had been taken by the R.A.F. The results of the bombing of Germany had been remarkable. "Yet here again the man who refuses to have his opinions provided for him ready-made will preserve a certain caution. He will note that . . . the Air Ministry publicity service differs greatly from those which work for the Army and Navy. It has less than their caution and takes a propagandist tone. To it every roofless shed in a factory means an engine destroyed, though in this country . . . we have had evidence that engines may go on working quite cheerfully under a tarpaulin when the roof has fallen in. In the second place, he will consider not only the results obtained but also the effort required to obtain them. In the third place he will be interested not only in the prospects of victory provided by area bombing, but also in the kind of victory which we seek. He will be concerned by the influence of the present policy upon the nation at large . . . he may note a distressing outbreak of extreme cynicism and brutality . . . he can hardly avoid meeting, especially if he is much in the company of women, a great deal of anxiety and distress."¹

Although its attacks on this country fell far short in weight and skill of those of the Allies on the Reich, the *Luftwaffe* nevertheless caused a fairly large number of casualties and did substantial damage of a non-military character. During the first twenty days of January only a few "hit and run" raids doing but trifling damage were recorded, but on January 21 about 90 German aircraft crossed the south-eastern coast and a fair proportion of them, perhaps 60 machines, attacked London. They did some damage and inflicted a few casualties, as did splinters of shell fired by our A.A. guns which struck curious and over-venturesome or unimaginative sight-seers. Bombs were also dropped at several places in Kent and, it was said, elsewhere in south-east England. Of

¹ *The Illustrated London News*, "The two Bishops," by Cyril Falls, March 11, 1944.

the enemy's machines 16 were shot down by night fighters or by A.A. guns. The German Government magnified the raid in order to comfort their subjects and claimed that it had inflicted far more damage than was actually the case. The next attack of any weight was delivered on January 29. As on the previous occasion the raiders, only about 60 strong this time, confined their attentions to south-east England, including London, but a smaller number attacked the capital than on January 21st. Civilian casualties in January were :

| | <i>Men</i> | <i>Women</i> | <i>Children under 16</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|---|------------|--------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Killed or missing .. | 45 | 39 | 23 | 107 |
| Injured and detained in hospital | 121 | 112 | 37 | 270 |

German air activity increased over south-east England in February. At first there were no heavy attacks. There was a short night raid on February 3 with two small attacks on London, and points in East Anglia were also raided. Nine hostile aircraft were brought down. After small-scale raids on February 11 and 12 over 50 hostile aircraft crossed the coast on February 13 and some reached London where they did damage, chiefly with incendiaries. Nine raiders were destroyed. An attack in the early hours of February 19 ushered in a series of sharp, short, but fairly heavy raids on London and places in the Home Counties and south-east England. Two waves of raiders approached from a north-easterly direction and a third wave came in later under a very heavy barrage. Large quantities of incendiaries were dropped in a widespread attack and the damage from these and high explosive bombs included :

A hospital, a convent and school, several churches, a factory, a local headquarters of the British Red Cross, an unoccupied hospital, a preserve factory which burnt fiercely, a home for the aged, a residential hostel for students.

The attacks were renewed during the next four nights and although no important military targets seem to have been hit much damage was done by fire and blast and many people were killed or injured, mostly in London.

The maximum number of raiders crossing the coast on any one night was estimated at 175, of which perhaps 100 reached the London area. Their losses were relatively high, 13 being destroyed on the night of February 22-23 alone, and ten on the following night.

The casualty list for February was much higher, as the following official figures show.

| | <i>Men</i> | <i>Women</i> | <i>Children under 16</i> | <i>Total.</i> |
|--|------------|--------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Killed, or missing believed killed | 350 | 475 | 136 | 961 |
| Injured and detained in hospital | 716 | 811 | 185 | 1,712 |

After a brief lull the *Luftwaffe* renewed the attack on the night of March 1-2 when about 100 aircraft crossed the coast and caused not a few casualties in the London area. Five were shot down, two by an officer commanding a Mosquito night-fighter squadron, who should have gone on leave but had a presentiment that "something might be doing," and stayed to fight. After a few short alerts and another lull the enemy attacked Greater London and targets in the south-eastern counties on March 14-15, losing 14 bombers but doing much incendiary damage. Small-scale and larger-scale attacks followed, the heaviest raids being those of March 21-22 when schools and other public buildings were wrecked and 11 raiders were felled, and of March 24-25 described as "the longest of recent attacks," when the barrage of gunfire reached a terrific intensity. Three London churches were destroyed by the attack made by some 90 aircraft, by no means all of which were engaged against London. Eight were destroyed. On the night of March 27-28 enemy aircraft crossed the Channel in some strength and, according to the official report, "flew over the west and south-west of England and South Wales. There was also slight enemy activity over the south-east coast. Bombs were dropped at a number of points causing some damage and casualties. Eleven enemy aircraft were destroyed."

An interesting sequel to these attacks—of which, incidentally, German propaganda published incredibly inflated versions in February and March—was the discovery after more than four weeks' search by men of the Hampstead demolition squads, aided by an expert with a radium detector, of the second of two containers

of radium buried when the Marie Curie Hospital was hit. The first was found after a week.

The March casualty list was lower than that of February. The official figures were :—

| | <i>Men</i> | <i>Women</i> | <i>Children under 16</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|---|------------|--------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Killed or missing, believed killed | 125 | 116 | 38 | 279 |
| Injured and detained in hospital | 325 | 261 | 47 | 633 |

Such was the German reply to the continuous storm of attack that had spread over the Reich with unabated and, indeed, increasing fury for so many months. It is difficult to believe that it represented more than an attempt to persuade the German public that the *Luftwaffe* was still capable of undertaking large-scale offensives. In fact Germany was fighting a defensive battle with diminishing reserves, especially of fighter aircraft. Speaking on March 28, General Arnold, Commanding General, U.S.A.A.F., said :

"Here is the crux of our air strategy and here we have been able to face the enemy squarely with a desperate dilemma. The only way he can fight back against these air attacks is by putting up strong forces of fighter aeroplanes. He has no fighter aeroplanes to spare. He knows that when we come ashore in the west he is going to need those aeroplanes desperately. Ought not he to save them? He cannot save them. Our bombing missions are headed for the real source of all his air power, the aeroplane factories, the ball-bearing plants, the vital installations. Without these he will be driven from the air in a week. He must put his fighters up and try to exchange them for enough of our bombers to cushion, though he cannot avert, the stunning blow. . . . You will understand, then, that our missions are by no means merely preliminaries to invasion. They are invasion."

The following were the losses in air fights or from A.A. fire of the R.A.F., the U.S.A.A.F., and the *Luftwaffe* respectively over north-western and central Europe during the Eighteenth Quarter :

| <i>Over and Around Britain</i> | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| | | <i>German</i> | <i>R.A.F.</i> <i>U.S.A.A.F.</i> |
| January | 30 | — | — |
| February | 55 | — | — |
| March | 59 | — | — |
| Total | 144 | | |

Over Western, North-Western and Central Europe

| | <i>German</i> | | <i>R.A.F.</i> | <i>U.S.A.A.F.</i> |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| | <i>By R.A.F.</i> | <i>By U.S.A.A.F.</i> | | |
| January | 93 | 578 ¹ | 385 | 237 |
| February | 51 | 668 ² | 245 | 337 |
| March | 41 | 1,061 ² | 331 | 547 ³ |
| Total | 185 | 2,307 ⁴ | 961 | 1,121 ⁴ |

In addition the Admiralty reported the sinking of five enemy aircraft by naval vessels and carrier-borne aircraft in the neighbouring seas during February and March. The grand total for the quarter is, therefore: German loss, 2,641 aircraft; R.A.F., including Dominion and Allied squadrons, 961; U.S.A.A.F. 1,121.

The following were the principal promotions and appointments in the R.A.F. to be recorded during the quarter ending on March 31:

Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal was promoted Marshal of the Royal Air Force on January 1. Air Marshal Sir John Slessor was appointed Deputy to General Ira C. Eaker, Air Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, and to command all R.A.F. units in that area, on January 9. On the same date Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas was appointed A.O.C.-in-C., Coastal Command. On January 25 Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham was appointed A.O.C. No. 2 Tactical Air Force, R.A.F., based in Great Britain. Air Vice-Marshal Elliot was appointed A.O.C. at Gibraltar, an important centre of the anti-U-boat campaign, in early March.

3: THE ARMIES IN BRITAIN

Little can be said here of the armies, British, Dominion, and Allied, that were massing in Britain for the invasion of the Continent. Enough that our island had become an advanced base, a training-ground, and a huge, immovable, but unsinkable aircraft-carrier. The chronicler must confine himself to the record of the chief official announcements, dealing mainly with the High Commands, published from late December to and including March 18, 1944.

On Christmas Eve the British and U.S. Governments announced the following appointments, "which have

¹ Figure reached by addition of U.S.A.A.F. estimates.

² American official figure.

³ Including 178 fighters.

⁴ This does not include machines lost (or enemy machines destroyed) during the operations of the Allied Mediterranean Air Force over Austria, Yugoslavia, etc.

been the result of conversations" between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister.

General Eisenhower.—Supreme Allied Commander of the British and U.S. Expeditionary Forces organizing in the United Kingdom for the liberation of Europe.

General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson.—Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean theatre.

General Sir Harold Alexander.—C.-in-C. of the Allied Armies in Italy.

General Sir Bernard Montgomery.—C.-in-C. of the British Group of Armies under General Eisenhower.

General Spaatz.—To command American Strategic Bombing Force operating against Germany.

On the night of December 27 two additional appointments were announced in the same terms, viz. : of General Sir Bernard Paget to be C.-in-C., Middle East, under General Wilson ; and Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder to be Deputy Supreme Commander under General Eisenhower. Four more appointments were announced in Washington next day. These were : Lieut.-General Jacob Devers to command the U.S. forces in the Mediterranean and to be Deputy Supreme Commander under General Wilson ; Major-General James Doolittle to command the Eighth U.S.A.A.F. in Britain *vice* Lieut.-General Ira C. Eaker who became Commander of the Allied Air Forces in the Mediterranean. Lieut.-General Nathan Twining to command the 15th U.S.A.A.F. in the Mediterranean.

Further appointments announced on January 9 were:

"Lieutenant-General Gammell is appointed Chief of Staff in the Mediterranean. Major-General Bedell Smith, United States Army, will become Chief of Staff to General Eisenhower in the United Kingdom."

The statement added that General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean, and General Devers, U.S. Army, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, had taken up their duties. On the night of January 16 the following statement was issued from Supreme Allied Headquarters :

"It can now be announced that General Eisenhower has assumed his duties in the United Kingdom assigned him by the combined Chiefs of Staff. On his journey from the Mediterranean to the United Kingdom he had conferences with the President and the Prime Minister." General Eisenhower had circulated his farewell message to the Forces in the Mediterranean on January 2. It was also made known that the following "invasion chiefs," as well as General Eisenhower, had arrived in London : General Montgomery ; Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory ; Lieutenant-General Carl Spaatz ; Lieut.-General van Strydonck de Burckel, C.-in-C., Belgian Army ; Major-General H. J. Phaff, commanding Netherlands troops ; General Wilhelm Hansteen, commander of the Norwegian forces ; General Sergei Ingr, C.-in-C., Czecho-Slovak Army ; General Sosnkowski, commander of the Polish forces in Britain.

General Sir Alan Brooke, C.I.G.S., was promoted to the rank of Field-Marshal on January 1.

On January 17 General Omar Bradley, who had commanded the American Second Army Corps in Tunisia and Sicily with great distinction, was appointed to the command of the United State Army in the Field under General Eisenhower.

On January 22 it was made known that General Eisenhower as senior U.S. Army Officer had assumed command of the European Theatre of Operations, U.S. Army, in addition to his duties as Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force. He appointed Major-General John C. Lee as Deputy Commander, European Theatre of Operations, in addition to his duties as Commanding-General, Services of Supply, E.T.O., U.S.A. Among General Lee's responsibilities was the operation of all administration and supply for the American Forces in the United Kingdom and for Continental operations.

Among the changes in British Army Commands officially announced during the quarter, the following may be mentioned here: General Sir H. E. Franklyn was appointed to the chief command of the Home Forces (January 6); Lieut.-General Sir Francis Nosworthy became C.-in-C., West Africa, *vice* General Sir George Giffard whose transfer to South-East Asia has been recorded on page 142. Lieut.-General Sir T. R. Eastwood was Governor and C.-in-C., Gibraltar, and Lieut.-General Sir Arthur Smith became G.O.C.-in-C., Persia and Iraq Command. Lieut.-General J. G. des R. Swayne was appointed Chief of Staff, India.

It was announced on March 18 that for reasons of operational security, a coastal belt about 10 miles in depth, but much deeper at some points, extending from the Wash round the south and east coasts to Land's End, together with certain smaller areas on the Firth of Forth, were to become protected areas on April 1. It was further announced that eight orders had been made by the Secretary of State for War concerning entry into the eight areas into which the banned coastal belt was to be divided.

The effect of these orders was to prohibit persons who were not on April 1 resident in the protected area defined in each order from entering or remaining in that area after that date. Certain classes of persons, e.g. members of Parliament, members of the forces on duty and certain Government servants on duty, were to be altogether exempt from the operation of these orders. Other classes of persons were given general permission to enter or be in these areas. Such were persons engaged on necessary business which could not be deferred and could not be transacted save by entering the protected area; persons visiting their parents, parents-in-law, husbands or wives, provided that the persons visited were ordinarily resident in the protected area; parents or persons *in loco parentis* visiting their children or wards, if under 16 years of age; persons visiting near relatives who were seriously ill; persons going to or being in a hospital, nursing home or sanatorium for tubercular patients in the protected area; persons passing through such an area by train or other public service vehicle without breaking journey within the area; students or pupils of a university, college or school therein; persons taking up residence with a person resident in such an area of whose household they were normally members; persons holding a certificate issued by a local authority that they had been rendered homeless by enemy action, who entered the protected area to stay with kinsfolk or friends; members of the Merchant Navy holding specified forms who were returning home on leave.

There were several duels between our batteries at Dover and the enemy's heavy guns at Cap Grisnez and Calais during the quarter. The heaviest, which lasted for 80 minutes, was on the night of March 20 and was the second of three such duels on successive nights.

NOTE.—For the debate in Parliament relating to Service Pay and Allowances in which Sir James Grigg, Mr. Eden and others took part, *see* p. 250.

CHAPTER V

THE FAR EASTERN WAR

I : BURMA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

After a subdued beginning the campaign on the Indo-Burmese borders flared up during February in Arakan ; and by the beginning of March fighting had broken out on a relatively large scale in several sectors from Buthidaung to the Hukawng Valley in the far north. When the rains had brought the last Arakan campaign to a close the Japanese were believed to have six divisions in Burma. That was in late May, 1943, but there was reason to believe that the enemy had received strong reinforcements, both drafts and new units, during the rainy season. Most of these were believed to have been transported by the Bangkok-Moulmein railway which had been completed more rapidly than British and Americans had expected. The sea route from Singapore to Rangoon was not entirely closed to the enemy, but it was dangerous. It was everywhere open to attack by British and Dutch submarines ; the last third of its total length of about 1,170 sea miles was exposed to raids from the advanced Allied airfields in eastern India ; last but not least, the drain on Japanese naval resources in the south-west Pacific had unquestionably prevented the enemy from sparing the cruisers, destroyers, and other war vessels required to escort any important convoy through waters where the British were believed to be present in strength.

Early in January it became known that troops of the Fourteenth Army were advancing in northern Arakan, and on January 11 an official report from A.H.Q. announced the recapture of Maungdaw. It was subsequently stated that much brisk fighting had preceded our reoccupation of this small rice port from which a

metalled road crossed the Mayu Range to Buthidaung. Most of the fighting

"was concentrated on a commanding feature a few miles to the north-east," the Special Correspondent of *The Times* reported,¹ "but such heavy casualties had been inflicted on the Japanese that they withdrew under cover of bad weather, and the final assault by British and Indian troops was made without loss. Much of this was due to the excellent work of British gunners who came up with their 25-pounders during the night and besides destroying Japanese bunkers at almost point-blank range, were so accurate with their counter-battery fire that for 24 hours the enemy troops were completely deprived of artillery support."

A delayed message from northern Burma announced on January 13 that General Stilwell had returned to Burma for the first time since May, 1942, when he conducted the retreat of the gallant remnants of the Chinese force into Assam². On the following day it was officially stated that West African troops from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and the Gold Coast were serving in the Indian theatre. The core of these troops who belonged to the Royal West African Frontier Force had served with great distinction in Ethiopia and their natural gift for forest warfare encouraged expectations that they would win fresh laurels on this front. On January 16 Admiral Mountbatten made his first appearance before the National Defence Council which discussed all the aspects of the Japanese war which would affect India as the main base from which Great Britain would wage it. On January 24 it was announced that the King had approved the following appointments :

TO BE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, ARMY GROUP IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA.—General Sir George Giffard, G.C.B., D.S.O.

TO BE COMMANDER, 14TH ARMY.—Lieutenant-General W. J. Slim, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.

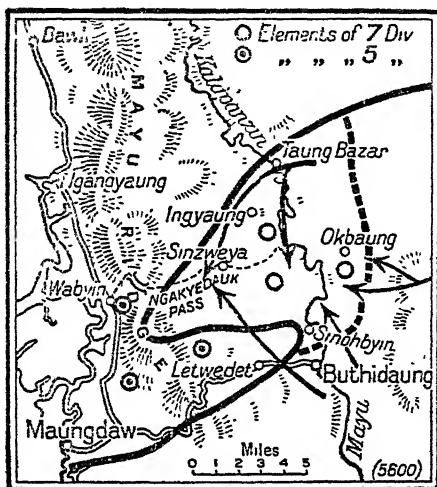
Sir George Giffard had been in command in West Africa since 1940 and he had spent more than 30 years of his military career in that continent. General Slim had commanded a brigade of the 5th Indian Division in Eritrea, where he was wounded, a division in Iraq during the operations against Rashid Ali, and a corps during the retreat from Burma.

For the rest of the month the troops of the Fourteenth Army in Arakan gradually advanced in the direction of Buthidaung and towards the Maungdaw-Buthidaung

¹ *Loc. cit.* January 13.

² *Cf. The Eleventh Quarter*, pp. 111-12.

motor-road, having the best of a number of minor engagements with the Japanese. But the enemy was strongly posted on the road especially at a point about six miles east of Maungdaw where he held two tunnels, the larger of them about 200 yards long, through which the road passed. Both were well protected from fire from the neighbouring hills, and the Japanese had accumulated a large amount of material in them and had also fortified



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the high ground under which the road had been driven. It was therefore necessary to use the Ngakyedauk Pass through the Mayu Hills which is traversed by a passable cart road, for an advance on Buthidaung. By February 2 advanced troops of the 7th Indian Division, much assisted by tanks and medium artillery, were within three miles of Buthidaung when the Japanese made a bold bid for victory by a counter-attack which, had it succeeded, would have destroyed that division and might have also destroyed the 5th Indian Division which was covering its flank and rear.

The Japanese plan, which requires to be studied with the accompanying map, was planned by Colonel Tanna-

bashi, a highly competent staff officer who had devised the flanking movement which had brought our offensive to naught in the spring of 1943. The Correspondent of *The Times* at Delhi gave the following account of the plan and the preliminaries to the engagements which followed :

"Before the battle opened the Fourteenth Army intelligence learned that a large Japanese task force would be freed for action against them. Suspecting that the Japanese would operate against their left flank, British tanks...which had been in the Maungdaw sector west of the Mayu Range, were ordered to cross the range through the Ngakyedauk Pass. The same night, February 3, the enemy appeared. They consisted of an enveloping force of three battalions, a penetrating force of similar size, a deep 'hook' battalion, with another battalion in reserve. They had with them artillery, signals, engineers and a variety of auxiliary units and mule transport.

Colonel Tannabashi . . . evidently planned to attack the 7th Indian Division which was east of the Mayu both in the front and in rear and to destroy it. The next stage was to have been the concentration of his main force on the Ngakyedauk Pass while the 'hook' detachment crossed the hills and cut the main road . . . which runs from Chittagong through Bawli to Maungdaw. Thereafter the whole force was to have made a descent on the rear of the 5th Indian Division which was west of the Mayu Range. The 5th Division would then . . . have either to surrender or to try to escape by sea."

It was an ingenious plan. The appearance of Japanese forces numbering some 6,000 men in the rear of the 7th Indian Division should have caused its instant retreat and liquidation as it retreated. But the British Command refused to conform to the Japanese plan. The Division simply faced both ways like the Gloucestershire Regiment at Alexandria in 1801 and defended itself, with skill and vigour, in a number of "boxes," i.e. defensive positions capable of all-round resistance. It owed much to the splendid support which it received from the air. Our tactics, which had been devised in preparation for some such Japanese move, depended largely for their success "on the possession by the XVth Army Corps¹ of a large fleet of transport aircraft to support our encircled division."²

"The first call for help came on February 6 from one of our defensive 'boxes' where ammunition was running low. Dakotas went out, but they were driven back by Japanese fighters. Brigadier-General Old, the American officer commanding the troop-carrier command, then boarded one of his aeroplanes and led the flight himself. The ammunition was delivered.

¹ Commanded by Lieutenant-General A. F. P. Christison and including the above-mentioned divisions.

² *The Times*, February 29.

... During the 21 days' action British and American crews of this command dropped 1,500 tons of ammunition, food, petrol, oil and medical supplies, and lost only one Dakota aircraft. After the first few days British air superiority over the battlefield . . . another main factor in our success, made itself felt to such an extent that the Japanese were unable to interfere with our transports except by anti-aircraft fire."

The fighting was marked by many exciting incidents. It opened with the occupation of Taung Bazar by the Japanese outflanking force, while the penetrating force seized the eastern extremity of the Ngakyedauk Pass, dug itself in very quickly and held on. Further north the "hook" crossed the Mayu ridge from the east, descended on the Bawli-Maungdaw road, shot up some transport and blew up two bridges. It did little more and after "milling around" for a fortnight it was driven back over the ridge with heavy loss by the 5th Indian Division. Taung Bazar was speedily retaken by a stronger force than the medical and inland water transport detachments and the infantry patrol which the enemy found there on February 4. On February 6 the Japanese attacked Divisional Headquarters. The attack was described by an officer observer with the Fourteenth Army. It began, he said,

"with a rain of machine-gun and mortar fire. The Japanese were camouflaged to blend with the vegetation, even to the wearing of green gloves, but made so much noise in approaching that the camp was on the alert. Officers, clerks and orderlies all took a hand in the defence . . . the brunt . . . being borne by signals clerks, who held off the enemy, killing 11 of them, until codes and cyphers had been destroyed. Eventually the whole complement joined their commander on a hill-top, where they decided to reach safety at another British camp, about a mile away. Grenade in hand, the senior British officer led all his staff, officers and men, to safety. . . ."

Crawling through dense jungle and wading shoulder-deep through streams the party escaped, and the Divisional Commander, Major-General Messervy, was soon directing operations from a new Headquarters.¹ An exciting series of actions was fought round the "tank harbour" of the Division. It was brilliantly and successfully defended by its British garrison, and Indian cooks, barbers and

¹He had commanded a raiding force in Ethiopia, and had served in Libya where he successively commanded the 10th Indian Brigade and the 4th Indian Division. He was once captured there but escaped. The 5th Indian Division was commanded in Arakan by Major-General H. R. Briggs.

sweepers volunteered for crew duties in the tanks and gave a good account of themselves. Over 700 Japanese dead were found in front of the Division's "hedgehogs" when the fighting ended.

It took about ten days of confused and fierce fighting before the rear of the 7th Division was finally cleared of the more threatening Japanese groups. Smaller parties were gradually hunted down and destroyed, but the expulsion of the enemy from the strong points which he had seized and fortified in the Ngakyedauk Pass required another week. During the later stages of the action the Japanese were short of food. One of their supply convoys was ambushed, another captured, and by February 29 the remnant of Colonel Tannabashi's force of 6,000 men had made off. Altogether 1,500 of the enemy were found and buried by our troops and more must have been left in the jungle. Their total loss was estimated at fully 4,000 killed and wounded. Our own loss cannot have been light. The battle had ended in the first considerable defeat of a Japanese Army by British and Indian troops and the psychological value of the success was great. At the same time the enemy's counter-stroke, although it had failed disastrously, had, nevertheless, gained him time by holding up our advance for nearly a month, a solid advantage with the monsoon rains and the end of the campaigning season due by the end of May.

During January and February there had been increasingly sharp fighting in the Chin Hills on the Tiddim-Tamu sectors, and in the Hukawng Valley far to the north. The Chins, fighting as irregular auxiliaries or in their tribal formations, harassed the enemy effectively. Inadequately armed as they were, they made even the Japanese look like children in the jungle and some of their exploits were astonishing. On one occasion two irregulars, armed, one with a tommy-gun and the other with a flintlock musket, rounded a corner on the jungle track to encounter 45 Japanese.

"The tommy-gunner got the officer in charge and three others with his first spray and when the Japanese attempted to rush him he kept at them until his gun burst. Then his only grenade was enough to send them scuttling into the jungle. Meanwhile the man with the flintlock had got off

three laborious rounds into the Japanese, and all was quiet again. . . . Recently a band of 35 Chin irregulars accounted for 210 Japanese in 10 days, largely by surprise attacks on much stronger forces." Lest the reader suppose that the Chins are all wild men of the woods, it is expedient to add that university graduates are serving in their partisan bands; and that one tribe who are fighting cherish the hope that Government will reward their services by the gift of a middle-standard school.

In the north the Chinese forces mentioned in the previous volume of this series as being in contact with Japanese outposts in the Hukawng Valley began an attack on the Japanese 18th Division which had distinguished itself at Singapore and in the invasion of Burma in 1942. The Chinese troops were assisted by an American force under Brigadier-General Merrill and by a British column which advanced down the Mali Valley which runs parallel with the Hukawng Valley on the left of the Chinese. This British column was composed partly of Gurkhas and partly of tribal levies, mostly Kachins, who are reputed as good jungle fighters as the Chins and Nagas. It is not yet clear whether this column came with the Chinese by way of the advancing Ledo Road or whether it descended from the northern outpost of Fort Hertz at the head of the Mali Valley, where a small garrison had kept the flag flying after the evacuation of Burma, receiving supplies sometimes by air and sometimes over the high passes of the Patkoi Range which divides northernmost Burma from north-eastern Assam. Its first objective, however, was clear. This was the village of Sumprabum where a small Japanese force had been established for some time. While it remained in hostile hands the Chinese 22nd and 38th Divisions operating in the Hukawng Valley were liable to flank attack from the valley of the Mali.

The Chinese force had made its way, not without fighting, into the northern part of the valley by mid-January. A detachment moved down the Tanai, as the head-stream of the Chindwin is called, to Taro and such small Japanese forces as were there made haste to depart. The main force took Mingru Ga, near Taihpa Ga, later in the month and captured Taihpa Ga on February 4. Progress was slow, for the country was difficult and the Japanese fought most obstinately under the command of

General Tanaka Shinchi. Several of their smaller rear-guards, however, were cut off and destroyed, and by the end of February the Chinese were nearing Maingkwan, south-west of the junction of the Tanai and Tawang Rivers, while a force of American infantry, the first to be engaged in South-East Asia, was preparing to cut in on the flank and rear of the Japanese at Maingkwan. This force, which Brigadier-General Merrill led, would seem to have crossed the mountains from Taro by way of Tasubum. At the same time the tribal levies in the Mali Valley ambushed a column moving north to reinforce Sumprabum on February 29 and repeated this success next day. About this time American critics began to get busy with the conduct of the campaign. On March 3 the United Press said that high military authorities in the U.S.A. were "displeased and concerned" at Admiral Mountbatten's failure to open his Burma campaign. The news agency went on to assert that while American strategists from the theatre of war had been pressing for a reopening of communications with China, Admiral Mountbatten

was unwilling, in the opinion of "informed quarters," to risk an offensive on a major scale because of the lack of shipping and naval support "which he believes essential to any Burmese campaign." The *United Press* added that Admiral Mountbatten could not exercise his judgment and ability freely because of his dependence upon "the British-Indian military system for his requirements." The same topic was discussed on the same day by the *New York Times*, which recorded an alleged rift between Admiral Mountbatten and Major-General Stilwell, who was disappointed at the failure to launch a large-scale offensive in Burma, but added that Major-General Albert Wedemeyer, a member of Admiral Mountbatten's staff, did not share General Stilwell's view. The correspondent of the *New York Times* who sent this information pointed out that the prior claims of the American forces in the Pacific and still more of the coming invasion of Europe must delay any offensive in south-east Asia, but, added the Correspondent of *The Times* at Washington, these factors get a minimum consideration in the widespread whispering campaign alleging the "failure" of Lord Louis Mountbatten in his new command. After this the American Press "eased off" its criticisms for a while, but it was likely that they would be renewed—as, indeed, they were in April.

Perhaps the best answer to the insinuation that the South-East Asia Command was not co-operating with General Stilwell's forces in the far north of Burma, was given by two announcements issued by that Command

on March 14 and March 17 respectively. The first stated that columns of the Fourteenth Army had entered Upper Burma and had crossed the Upper Chindwin at several points north of Tamanthi. These crossings were stated to have been made in conjunction with unspecified operations already in progress. Simultaneously it was announced that Admiral Mountbatten had been visiting his "deputy," General Stilwell, at his Ledo Headquarters. This was the first public announcement that General Stilwell had accepted the post of Deputy Supreme Allied Commander in this region. It added that the Admiral and the General had consulted together on the progress recently achieved in the northern sectors of the Burma front. The Delhi Correspondent of *The Times* observed :

Whether it was or was not so intended, the announcement . . . will be read as an indirect commentary on American Press reports of differences between General Stilwell—who in respect of his China responsibilities is an independent commander—and Admiral Mountbatten on questions of strategy in south-east Asia.

An official account of the movement which did not specify the points where the Chindwin had been crossed said that the troops engaged in this operation had reached the river after a 100-mile march through the Naga Hills in torrential rain. Some of the mules died of exhaustion, but there were only 17 casualties from accident or illness among the troops, who crossed the river in rubber dinghies and small petrol-driven motor launches which had been dropped for them by Allied aircraft.

On March 17 it was made known that a strong airborne expedition had landed in the rear of the Japanese and that it was understood that it was intended that this force should co-operate against the rear of the 18th Japanese Division which was falling back under pressure from General Stilwell's troops towards Mogaung. On March 19 the Correspondent of *The Times* at Delhi (*loc. cit.* March 20) was able to give some details of this remarkable operation. It had begun about March 5, when on a moonlit night,

"gliders were towed over the Chin Hills by aircraft of the Eastern Command's Air Commando, led by an American, Colonel Cochran. They crossed the Chin Hills at a height of 7,000 feet in the course of their 200-mile journey." The Correspondent went on to explain that the object of the gliders was to bring American engineers and British soldiers to a place selected in advance for the rapid construction of airstrips. The pilots of the towing aeroplanes and gliders were American. The engineers brought elaborate equipment, and happily there was no aerial interception and no

Japanese troops, whose presence might have been fatal to the scheme, were anywhere near the chosen landing places. As it was, several gliders broke their under-carriages in landing, and others crashed more seriously, killing or wounding their passengers. But these losses did not prevent the engineers and the troops helping them from having their landing strips ready within 12 hours for the Dakota troop-carriers that were to bring the bulk of the expedition. The remainder of the first contingent of troops who were drawn from a north-country regiment deployed and covered the preparations.

Then came the Dakota and C47 transport aeroplanes carrying the main body. The American Brigadier-General Old piloted the first Dakota to land. Air Marshal Baldwin who commands the Tactical Air Force was close on his tail. Commenting afterwards on what he saw, Air Marshal Baldwin said, "One has never seen real transport operation until one has stood in the light of a Burma moon and watched transports coming in and taking off from a single strip at the rate of one every three minutes."

The surprise had been effected by choosing landing sites far from any Japanese military post and also by keeping the skies of Upper Burma clear of Japanese aircraft during the days preceding the landing and during the landing itself. By the time the Japanese had discovered the 4,000-ft. long landing strips and sent a force of escorted bombers to attack, the strips were defended by British Spitfires and A.A. batteries. Of the 30 Japanese aircraft which came into action five were certainly, and others probably, destroyed for the loss of one Spitfire.

A considerable force, decidedly larger, it appeared, than the Wingate Force which had raided the Japanese communications in the preceding year¹ had been landed in what was afterwards stated to have been the Katha region where the westward sweep of the Irrawaddy brings the great river close to the Myitkyina-Mandalay railway.

It was not until 12 days after the landing that the airborne troops had their first encounter with a Japanese force which they defeated, inflicting many casualties and suffering but slight loss. Later in the month it was disclosed that Major-General Wingate was in command of the airborne force, and that his troops had joined forces, with the column which had crossed the Chindwin. But on April 1 the War Office announced that this most brilliant and skilful leader had been killed on March 24 in an aeroplane crash in northern Burma. On his return

¹ This force was believed to have numbered about 3,000 men all told. About a third were said to have been lost, some of whom afterwards were discovered to have escaped into Chinese territory. For an account of this enterprise see *The Fifteenth Quarter*, pp. 115-17.

from a visit to a forward area to a base in Assam, his machine, a Mitchell bomber, crashed into a high ridge.¹

Major-General Lentaigne was appointed to the command of the airborne force in his stead.

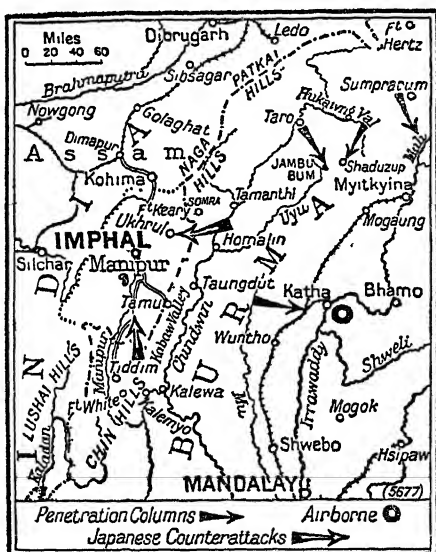
By this time, however, the face of the campaign had changed. The Japanese did not stand on the defensive against the threat from the north to their right wing. Instead they adopted a bold strategy of attack in the centre. The Indian State of Manipur was their objective. Imphal, the capital of the State, is the Headquarters of the IVth Indian Army Corps which is responsible for the defence of the Naga and northern Chin "Hills" (in reality high forest-clad mountain ranges) against the Japanese forces in the Chindwin Valley. Around Imphal is a plain on which several airfields have been constructed, traversed by the Manipur River and its affluents and bounded on all sides by mountainous country. From the plain roads have been constructed to Tamu, only about 20 miles from the Chindwin and to Tiddim, about 100 miles south of Imphal. The road eastward from Tamu in the valley of the Kabaw, an affluent of the Chindwin, is the one by which General Alexander's Army retreated from Burma² in May, 1942. It was then a cart track but the Japanese had since made it suitable for heavy traffic. They had also built a road up the lower valley of the Manipur River in the direction of Tiddim, our road-head in the mountains south of the Imphal plain. These are the only roads by which an enemy can bring tanks, heavy artillery and lorries to Imphal from the east and the nature of the country makes it relatively easy to block their exits into the plain. Our superiority in tanks and guns encouraged confidence in our ability to deal drastically with any lightly armed Japanese parties which might enter the plain after by-passing our road-blocks on its edge.

Nevertheless, the Imphal position has one serious defect. The supply line of the garrison runs parallel

¹ All on board perished, among them two well-known war correspondents, Mr. Stuart Emeny of the *News Chronicle* and Mr. Stanley Wills of the *Daily Herald*.

² Q.v. *The Eleventh Quarter*, p. 110.

with the front, and as the nature of the border country makes a continuous defence impossible, an enemy from Burma can attack it at its most vulnerable points. The high-road from Imphal to the Bengal-Assam railway at Dimapur, 90 crow-fly miles north of Imphal, passes for some 30 miles through the belt of mountain country walling in the plain from the north. If the Japanese could seize and hold the road in this difficult area they would



ATTACK AND COUNTER-ATTACK, BURMA, MARCH 31

virtually blockade Imphal since the only other link between Manipur and the rest of India is the more vulnerable and worse road to Silchar in the west. This road, which passes through forests and mountains, is easily blocked, more especially when the heavy monsoon rains begin in earnest at the end of May. Once blockaded, Imphal could only be supplied by air. So the Japanese, as the event proved, hoped that by cutting the Dimapur road they would eventually force the Imphal garrison either to stand a siege with small hope of relief before the rains

came or to break out towards Assam with the loss of their heavy equipment. The capture of Imphal would give them a stronghold from which they could not be dispossessed before the monsoon brought all major operations to a standstill and would put them in possession of valuable airfields. From these they could operate against the railway that carried provisions, men and material for General Stilwell's army beyond the Ledo railhead and against the airfields from which Allied air transports were providing China with war material and supplying General Stilwell's vanguards and our own airborne troops. Their success would spell ruin to the Allied campaign in northern Burma.

The idea that the advance on Manipur was no more than "a token invasion" of India had its origin, perhaps, in excessive attention to Japanese propaganda concerning the co-operation with the invading forces of an "Indian National Army" commanded by the Bengali quisling and Congress leader, Subhas Chandra Bose. Signs of the Japanese intention to attack had been noted early in March and the movement had obviously been planned before our airborne landing in the Katha region emphasized the necessity of calling check to the attack in the north. By March 15 the enemy seemed to be preparing to envelop our positions near Tiddim. On March 22 the official report of the S.E.A.C. admitted that the enemy had crossed the frontier. A summary of official *communiqués* and appreciations by war correspondents published between March 17 and March 24 gave the following picture of the campaign :

The Japanese had advanced from the south against Tiddim. Small columns had got round the flanks of our force and had established road-blocks behind it, but these were threatened in turn by Imperial troops from the north. The enemy was also moving against Tamu from Thaukdut on the Chindwin and up the parallel Kabaw Valley. He had been held up and had lost five tanks and several hundred men before Tamu on March 22 ; but from this main force detachments had spread westwards into the hills south of the Tamu-Palel road, which was held in force by the Fourteenth Army. Finally several lightly equipped Japanese columns taking off from the Chindwin at Homalin and other points north of Thaukdut had made their way through the rugged Somra hill tracts, had crossed the border, and might equally be advancing towards Kohima on the high road between Imphal and Dimapur or towards Imphal itself through Ukhrul, where a small British and Indian force awaited them.

It soon became clear that the Japanese forces which were invading Manipur through the Somra hills were numerically stronger than had been expected and that they had both Ukhrul and Kohima in mind. In the south the 17th Division had to evacuate Tiddim—as General Auchinleck announced on March 31 when he addressed the Legislative Assembly on the progress of the campaign—and fell back slowly, fighting hard against Japanese attempts to outflank and surround it, and from time to time counter-attacking strongly. Telegraphing from Delhi on March 29 the Correspondent of *The Times* gave the following account of the situation at the front (*loc. cit.* March 30) :

After first describing the success of Allied fighter squadrons over the air force assembled by the enemy in support of his offensive against Imphal, he continued :

"In the land fighting it is evident that Fourteenth Army forces have suffered a reverse in the Ukhrul area 35 miles north-east of Imphal in the Somra hill country . . . but there is no reason to suppose that the situation is regarded with any great anxiety. Still further north, Japanese columns, presumably those heading for Kohima, are reported in movement. These thrusts at the road between Imphal and Kohima, which is the Fourteenth Army's link with the vital Bengal-Assam railway, and at the Manipur Road Station, continue to be dangerous. Fighting on the whole front is increasing in intensity as the Japanese offensive develops. . . ."

And this was the situation at the end of March on the Manipur front. The enemy had gained ground but slowly and with heavy loss beyond Tiddim ; near Tamu he had gained no ground of importance, but to the north-east of Imphal he had taken Ukhrul and was nearing the plain, and news of his appearance before Kohima was expected at any moment.

Meanwhile, there had been sharp fighting in Arakan. While the XVth Army Corps had been engaged in the intricate actions which ended in the defeat of Colonel Tannabashi's manoeuvre, a force composed largely of West Africans had moved down the Kaladan River. The object of this advance, the troops engaged in which were supplied by air, was to cover the flank of the XVth Army Corps. Early in February Gambian troops took the village of Kaladan.

In March, however, the Japanese were strongly reinforced, and the West Africans, who do not seem to have exceeded a brigade in strength,

retired through Kaladan, which they had left behind them, to the confluence of the Pichaung and Kaladan Rivers. Further encounters followed in the course of which the Africans showed a great aptitude for bush fighting and night attacks, and a Gold Coast battalion surprised and retook Kaladan. At the end of March they claimed to have inflicted 1,500 casualties on the Japanese at much less cost to themselves, and they had done excellent work in building roads and airstrips for future use.

In the Mayu area fighting continued during March. The Japanese clung obstinately to the two tunnels on the Maungdaw-Buthidaung road and to a stronghold known as "Hill 551," which overlooked the road from the south and gave the enemy excellent observation. On March 2 positions north-north-east of Buthidaung were carried and held against fierce counter-attacks, and after some small parties left wandering in the forests in our rear had been destroyed, the attack on Buthidaung was renewed. The enemy were driven from the village on March 11 and they were next expelled from the high ground south and west of it. The important Htindaw Hill east of the Mayu Range fell on March 13. There was also sharp fighting at Razabil, a Japanese stronghold south of Maungdaw, and on March 13 British and West African troops landed 15 miles south of Razabil, captured six villages, expelling or destroying their garrisons, and fortified themselves there. It does not, however, appear that this move was more than a diversion designed to prevent the Japanese from reinforcing Razabil.

The last half of March saw more efforts to oust the Japanese from their positions commanding part of the Maungdaw-Buthidaung road. The enemy, whose 5th Division must have been reinforced, after its heavy losses, by fresh troops probably transported by barge to Akyab, fought most obstinately and often counter-attacked. On one occasion a force of some 400 men which had infiltrated into our administrative area positions was trapped and almost annihilated. On March 30 S.E.A.C. Headquarters announced our occupation of the western tunnel on the Maungdaw-Buthidaung road which the enemy had abandoned. Fighting continued on the hills between the tunnels.

To complete the picture of the campaign the further

operations of General Stilwell's force and the Gurkha-Kachin column operating parallelly in the Mali Valley are summarized from S.E.A.C. reports.

On March 4 the Chinese took Miangkwan, and when the American column under General Merrill cut in behind the retreating Japanese and took Walawbum on their line of retreat, a great part of their 18th Division seemed in danger, but the enemy extricated his troops and fell back to the saddle dividing the Hukawng Valley from that of the Mogaung River. On March 16, after much stiff fighting, General Stilwell's Chinese were near Jambubum, the centre of the Japanese resistance. On March 20 S.E.A.C. announced that the Huwkwang Valley had been cleared, that Chinese troops had also occupied Tasubum some 25 miles west-north-west of the saddle, that Jambubum had fallen, and that the Gurkha-Kachin column in the Mali Valley had captured Sumprabum and was advancing beyond it. On March 23 General Stilwell's vanguard was over the saddle and between Jambubum and Shaduzup. On March 26 the Gurkha-Kachin combination was 33 miles beyond Sumprabum and still advancing towards Myitkyina. On March 30 S.E.A.C., reporting further steady progress at the head of the Mogaung Valley, said that the fierceness of the fighting was illustrated by the high percentage of wounds inflicted by grenade and bayonet among the Chinese casualties.

The activities of the Allied Air Forces on this front must now be recorded. Besides co-operating with the army from Arakan to the Hukawng Valley, the Allied Air Forces, in which the R.A.F. greatly predominated, made many attacks on Japanese communications. In January they raided many hostile centres, notably the Yenangyaung oilfields, the ports of Rangoon, Moulmein and Akyab, Prome on the Irrawaddy, important railway stations and junctions, and the chief airfields. River traffic on the Irrawaddy and Chindwin was also a frequent target of our attacks. Late in the month the Japanese seem to have received appreciable reinforcements of aircraft and pilots, for they showed up in strength on the Arakan front where they made a relatively large number of sorties to aid Colonel Tannabashi's attack on our communications. In February, indeed, more Allied machines were lost than Japanese, although it is not clear how many of these were transport and how many operational aircraft. In March, however, the situation changed materially, and the fighters of the R.A.F., strengthened by the substitution of Spitfires for some of the Hurricanes, had the upper hand.¹ Heavy attacks by U.S. and British bombers

¹ The Americans also received Lightnings which their pilots used with great effect. At the same time the admirable work done by the Allied Air

damaged many Japanese machines parked on aerodromes in Central Burma between March 8 and March 11, and the one serious effort of the enemy to support his advance into Manipur by an air offensive came to complete grief. S.E.A.C. reported on March 29 :

"Twenty-four enemy aircraft were destroyed in air combats extending many miles over north Burma on March 27, when a force of enemy bombers escorted by fighters was intercepted by Allied fighters. In addition to the enemy aircraft reported destroyed six were probably destroyed and others damaged. The same day four more enemy aircraft, attempting to intercept Allied aircraft over Burma, were destroyed and three were damaged." Six more Japanese machines were shot down when the enemy renewed his attack next day.

The returns for losses given and inflicted in air combats during the quarter were :

| | | | <i>Japanese destroyed</i> | <i>Allied, destroyed or missing</i> |
|----------|----|----|---------------------------|---|
| January | .. | .. | 26 | 17 |
| February | .. | .. | 14 | 23 |
| March | .. | .. | 107 | 34 |
| | | | <hr/> 147 | <hr/> 74 |

In the Indian Ocean Japanese submarines, commanders of which were accused of committing grisly cruelties, and about ten German U-boats based on Penang, caused some loss of shipping during the quarter. British submarines were also active. The Admiralty announced on February 19 :

In Far Eastern waters H.M. submarines attacked and sank a supply ship of large size, another of medium size and several small naval craft. The next Admiralty announcement, issued on March 21, said that during recent patrols seven ships, two of medium and two of small size, were sunk. One of the medium-sized supply ships was torpedoed and sunk off the Nicobar Islands and the other in the Straits of Malacca. A large river steamer was shelled and left in flames off the east coast of Sumatra, and a small supply ship carrying motor transport was torpedoed and sunk. A large supply ship was torpedoed off Sabang, at the northern tip of Sumatra, but the necessary "avoiding action" prevented observation of the results. A convoy was successfully attacked in the Straits of Malacca. The names of six submarine commanders engaged in these operations were given.

Force and its 2-1 score of "kills" tended to obscure the fact that the demands on its energies had increased greatly, especially in the field of transport. The supply by air of General Stilwell's advanced forces, of our airborne expedition to northern Burma, of the 7th Division during the crisis of the Arakan campaign, of the troops on the Kaladan and of other outlying or temporarily isolated forces, together with the regular traffic over "The Hump" to China made serious calls on pilots and machines.

2 : CHINA, JAPAN, AND RUSSIA

There was little fighting between the Chinese and Japanese armies during the quarter. Since the Changteh campaign in which the Japanese had been expelled from the "rice-bowl" of central China, but not until they had done great damage, the war died down to an affair of skirmishes and patrol encounters. The Japanese, who had reinforced Burma and suffered appreciable losses in the south-west Pacific, seemed to have abandoned any idea of large-scale operations against the elusive Chinese, who were often beaten but returned to harass invading Japanese forces until they fell back to their bases. On the other hand Chinese production of arms and munitions fell far short of the volume required for any serious offensive against their opponents, and the supplies which reached Chungking by air did not make good the deficiency. Nevertheless, the American and Chinese Air Forces received enough material from India to enable them to make head with increasing success against Japanese numerical preponderance and to inflict important losses on Japanese shipping in Chinese and Indo-Chinese waters. Before recording the chief operations in which the 14th U.S.A.A.F. and their Chinese allies were engaged, something must be said of the remarkable expansion of air traffic between India and China during this and the preceding quarters.

In a message published by *The Times* on January 7, its Special Correspondent at G.H.Q., India, recorded that President Roosevelt had recognized the outstanding services of the India-China wing of the American Air Transport Command in flying vital war supplies across the Himalaya to China by an official citation; and that he had asked General Stilwell, the Commander of the American forces in this region, to convey his personal thanks to every officer and man concerned. This was the first time in this war that a presidential citation had been received by what was technically a non-combatant formation, though these huge unarmed transports flew

within range of Japanese fighters, which had shot down some of them, to say nothing of their constant struggle against the storms and clouds of these immense mountain ranges.

The Correspondent explained that the first essential in carrying tonnage over "the Hump," as the pilots irreverently styled the Himalaya, was to maintain the American fighter and bomber squadrons in China in nearly all their requirements, including aircraft and spare parts; and as tonnage had mounted, so the range of operations had extended to Hong Kong, Haiphong and even Formosa. Deliveries had been stepped up astonishingly rapidly. In May, 1942, only 85 tons could be flown into China. "Now there is a shuttle service working direct from the United States to Assam carrying high priority freight and spare parts over a route of 17,000 miles.

"Among the original unit were pilots from the American Volunteer Group, the famous Flying Tigers, some of General Doolittle's airmen on their way home, and . . . commercial pilots whose number has since been considerably increased. A few more aircraft became available, but they were still flying through the monsoon in this formidable country, on only a compass course, and reached their objective on a calculation of elapsed time. They flew along the jungle-covered valleys and soared above the timber line over rocky ice-clad peaks, 17,000 feet high, often amid solid banks of cloud and always at the mercy of sudden storms. Even now, above the mountains the directional wireless beams on which they fly are liable to be bent for many miles, and at night such is the strength of tailwinds that a pilot has been known to overshoot his base by three hours."

In time new airfields were constructed and new aircraft carrying heavier loads and with higher ceilings came into use. One was the Curtis Commando, with its two 2,000 h.p. engines, which had not yet been tested by the American Army. "It is the pride of the India-China Wing that they brought this machine into service by their own ingenuity and made the necessary modifications out of the blue." Next came the Liberator Express, an adaptation of the famous bomber, and pilots were now given courses in India. It was "a triumph of improvisation." Men with only 500 flying hours' experience "are taking these unarmed transports over the Hump, while it took nearly 4,000 hours to become even a co-pilot in America before the war—and they all agree that there is nothing like the Hump, even over the Andes in America." The wing had organized its rescue squad so efficiently that in three months three out of every four airmen who had been compelled to bale out into the jungle or the mountains had been saved.

The commander of this remarkable force is Brigadier-General Earl S. Hoag. Colonel T. O. Hardin controls the sector which includes the "Hump." The deputy-commander of the Transport Command, Brigadier-General C. R. Smith, the president in peace-time of one of the largest civil air lines in the U.S.A., was temporarily seconded to this theatre and was in Assam in January.

The first aerial operation reported from China in

January was a raid on Takao and Tamsui, Formosa, on January 4. On January 23 Mitchells with fighter escort bombed Kaitak airfield, Hong Kong, and other bombers in a sea-sweep off the south-eastern Chinese coast sank two ships in convoy. Continuing their sweeps, the Mitchells sank five small steamers off Foochow and another between Hong Kong and Nampang Island on January 24, and destroyed two 1,200-ton freighters and a mine-sweeper on the following day. In February General Stilwell's headquarters announced several still greater successes.

On February 2 fighters intercepted 25 Japanese fighters, including new Tojos,¹ presumably on their way to attack an American base. Of these, seven were certainly and seven more probably destroyed. On February 4 Headquarters reported an attack on nine ships in convoy. Of these five were sunk and two badly damaged. All the aircraft returned safely. On February 4 China-based American bombers raided an ordnance factory at Bangkok, starting many fires. On February 6 Mitchells attacked railway targets in Indo-China and fighters sank a number of small craft on the Yangtze. Two American machines were lost in these operations. Chinese machines on February 7 attacked the northern end of the Yellow River Bridge on the Peiping-Hankow railway without loss.

On February 15 the Chungking correspondent of *The Times* telegraphed: "American bombers have spent a busy week-end attacking coastal objectives in Indo-China and Hainan, and coastal shipping. On February 15 Liberators dropped 63 tons of bombs on railway yards and repair shops at Vinh, Indo-China, and fighter-bombers attacked Japanese barracks and aerodrome installations. Mitchells on sweep over the Gulf of Tongking sank a 2,700-ton steamer and also a 750-ton vessel. They then attacked the docks at Bakli Bay, in Hainan, destroying railway tracks and an oil dump. They seriously damaged two 1,000-ton steamers and attacked a convoy of six ships off Foochow, sinking one 10,400-ton transport, two 700-ton freighters, and one 1,200-ton freighter, and damaging two 1,200-ton freighters.

In March the Americans again struck at Siam where on the 5th their Mitchells claimed to have destroyed nine machines grounded on Chengmai aerodrome. On the previous day American and Chinese Mitchells with fighter escort attacked Kiungshan aerodrome and claimed over 30 Japanese aircraft, some destroyed on the ground, others shot down in air combats. Mitchells with Lightnings for escort made sweeps over the Yangtze, destroying

¹ "Tojo" was the name given by the Americans to a new Japanese fighter which appeared on various fronts early in 1944. It was described as similar in appearance to the Thunderbolt, and lighter than the P47, the Corsair and the Hellcat. It was believed to be less powerful than these American machines, but very manoeuvrable.

a small tanker and some river craft and shooting down four Japanese intercepting aircraft. These operations cost the Allies one aeroplane.

On March 27 General Stilwell's headquarters reported the sinking of over 2,000 tons of Japanese shipping by Mitchell bombers which raided shipping and harbour installations at Hainan Island on March 26. Shipping at sea and on the great Chinese rivers had been the principal target of the 14th U.S.A.A.F. Its mission was defined by General Chennault as : to destroy Japanese shipping ; to destroy enemy aircraft ; to assist Chinese ground forces in resisting further Japanese encroachments on strategically important Chinese territory. "The attack on shipping has absolute first priority," he said,¹ and returns published at the beginning of April showed that it had been remarkably effective. During the last four months of 1943, 63 Japanese ships had been sunk, and 55 more had been sent to the bottom by the American bombers in January and February, 1944. The 118 ships sunk represented a loss of about 221,000 tons, and it was believed that some of the 36 vessels reported as "probably sunk" had become total losses. In addition the 14th U.S.A.A.F. had disposed of seven small naval craft and 241 miscellaneous river boats, sailing junks and the like during these six months.

The record of destruction of Japanese aircraft had also been good. In the same period General Chennault's fighters had accounted for 211 Japanese fighters, 51 bombers and eight other aircraft in air combats and claimed 97 more destroyed on the ground. "Probables" totalled 19. The drain on Japanese shipping and aircraft in China was increasing and was likely before long to affect the enemy's strength in Burma.

Although there were indications that relations between the Kuomintang Party and the Communists were still strained, no serious collision between their forces seems to have occurred. Late in March it became known that Wang Ching-wei, the chief of the puppet Nanking Government, was seriously ill. Cheng Chung-po, president of the legislative *yuan* of that Government and mayor of Shanghai, took over his duties temporarily.

On February 21, important changes in the Japanese High Command were announced. Their principal effect was to increase the power of the Prime Minister, General Tojo, who was now appointed Chief of the Army General Staff. Admiral Shimada, Naval Minister, was made Chief of the Naval General Staff. Both held their Cabinet portfolios. Other appointments were :

General Atsushi Ushiroku to be deputy chief of the Army General Staff and a member of the War Council ; Lieutenant-General Iida to be C.-in-C. of the Army Central District Headquarters. Admiral of the Fleet Nagano,

¹ From an account of a conversation with General Stilwell telegraphed to the *Sunday Times* by its Special Correspondent at Chungking, April 1, 1944, and published on April 2.

C.N.G.S., and Field-Marshal Sugiyama, C.G.S. (Army), were relieved of their posts, but were appointed "Highest military advisers to the Emperor."

General Tojo was now Prime Minister, C.G.S., and Minister for War, Education and Commerce and Industry. It was the first time that the Ministers for War and for the Navy had combined their offices with the headship of their respective General Staffs. It was believed that the changes had been caused, not by the American attack on Truk, which was too recent a development to explain it, but by the increasingly disastrous situation of the forces in Australasia. The Japanese had failed to withdraw their outposts in the "Southern Seas" in time. The vast expansion of the U.S. Fleet and the attrition of the Japanese mercantile marine had made it impossible either to supply or to evacuate the large garrisons in New Guinea, Rabaul and the Solomons, but it would seem that the political chiefs, for reasons of prestige and propaganda, had opposed evacuation while it was still possible. The two Chiefs of Staff who resigned were believed to have thrown their hands in as a protest against this policy; and their appointment to be the Sovereign's "Highest Military Advisers" seemed to indicate that they were not regarded as responsible for the predicament of the Japanese forces in the south-west Pacific theatre.

On March 31 an agreement between Japan and the U.S.S.R. on the subject of the Japanese oil and coal concessions in northern (Russian) Sakhalin was made public. It marked an important success for Russian diplomacy. The following were its main points:

The Japanese Government agreed to cancel, 26 years before their expiry, the oil and coal concessions granted by the Soviet Government to Japan in Russian Sakhalin in 1925, and to transfer to the Russian Government, in return for a payment of 5,000,000 roubles, all Japanese oil and coal concessions in properties in north Sakhalin. The Russian Government undertook to supply 50,000 metric tons of oil from the Okha oilfields to Japan annually, during the five years following the end of the present war. Important reservations were also made in the protocol prolonging the Russo-Japanese fisheries convention. The Japanese undertook not to exploit the fisheries leased by them along the eastern coast of the Kamchatka peninsula and in the region north of Kamchatka until the end of the war.

The Japanese official news agency commenting on the agreement on March 31 said that this transfer of Japanese interests in northern Sakhalin had removed a constant cause of disputes between Tokyo and Moscow, and had thus "placed Russo-Japanese relations on a sounder and more positive basis." Possibly, but it was improbable that the Japanese would have sacrificed the advantages which they had won in 1925 had they felt surer of their ability to resist the Allied Navies and to hold China down.

Japan was being driven to the defensive, how and why the last two sections of this chapter will explain.

3 : A BLACK RECORD

On January 28 Mr. Eden made a statement on the treatment of British prisoners of war and civilian internees

in the Far East. He had a horrible story to tell. He began by telling the House that a large number of letters and postcards had been received from prisoners in the Far East which almost always suggested that the writers were well treated and in good health.

"There is no doubt," he continued, "that some of these communications, at any rate, are in terms dictated by the Japanese authorities." He regretted to have to tell the House that the information reaching His Majesty's Government left no doubt that the true state of affairs was very different, so far as the great majority of prisoners in Japanese hands were concerned.

Of these prisoners a high proportion, perhaps 80 to 90 per cent, were located in the southern area comprising the Philippines, the Netherlands East Indies, Borneo, Malaya, Burma, Siam and Indo-China. The Japanese Government had hitherto withheld permission for any neutral inspection of the camps in question. The numbers held prisoner had not been communicated to us nor had the names of a great many who must have been taken.

The information which had been reaching the Government for some time past concerning the conditions in which these prisoners had been worked and detained in some of these areas was so grave that it was likely to cause great distress among the relatives of prisoners of war and internees and the Government had therefore felt bound to satisfy themselves of its authenticity before making it public. They were now so satisfied and it was his painful duty "to tell the House that in Siam there are many thousands of prisoners from the British Commonwealth, including India, who are being compelled by the Japanese military to live in tropical jungle conditions, without adequate shelter, clothing, food, or medical attention; and these men are forced to work on building a railway and making roads. Our information is that their health is rapidly deteriorating, that a high percentage are seriously ill, and that there have been some thousands of deaths . . . the number of such deaths reported by the Japanese to us is just over 100. The railway and roads concerned lead into Burma. . . ."

An eye-witness had reported of a camp in Siam that "I saw many prisoners clearly. They were skin and bone, unshaven and with long matted hair. They were half-naked." The same witness reported that they were without hats or shoes. This was in a tropical climate, almost uninhabited, so that there were no local resources from which the prisoners could obtain medical or other relief. We had information from one other part of this huge southern area. "From Java comes evidence which leaves no doubt that many of our prisoners are confined in camps with no adequate protection from malarial infection and lacking in proper provision for sanitation: except in so far as prisoners may sometimes obtain food from local sources, the food and clothing provided is insufficient to maintain them in health. . . ." The Government had no information from other parts of the southern area. The only exceptions to be made were the internment camps for civilians in our old camp at Changi and near Bangkok and Saigon, where conditions were at least tolerable.

The Japanese Government's refusal to allow neutral inspection of camps in the southern area was difficult to understand in view of the fact that they had allowed inspection, though not on a scale which could be regarded as adequate, in the northern area, comprising Hong Kong, Formosa, Shang-

hai, Korea, and Japan.¹ Conditions there were tolerable, although the scale on which food was provided was inadequate to maintain health over long periods. Conditions in Hong Kong, however, seemed to be growing worse. Were that all it would be a bad enough business, but there was worse to come. The Government had a growing list "of cases of brutal outrage on individuals or groups." He cited two cases affecting civilians. An officer in the Shanghai Municipal Police Force had been interned in a camp for political suspects. He incurred the displeasure of the Japanese Gendarmerie, who took him to their office. When he emerged he was practically out of his mind. His arms and feet were infected where the ropes had left deep scars, he had lost 40 lbs. weight and he died within a day or two of his release. The second case came from the Philippines. There on February 11, 1942, three British subjects escaped from the Japanese civilian internment camp at Santo Tomas, Manila. They were recaptured and flogged. Two days later they were sentenced to death, in defiance of international law, and were shot with automatic pistols and were not killed outright.

Of cases affecting soldiers he cited one in which a number of Indian soldiers captured in Burma had their hands tied behind their backs, were made to sit in groups beside the road, and were systematically bayoneted in turn, each receiving three bayonet thrusts. By a miracle one man who collapsed, recovered and reached our lines. The other case concerned an officer of a well-known line regiment who was captured and submitted to grievous torture. Happily for him a tank attack put the Japanese to flight and he was rescued. The third case was that of the transport *Lisbon Maru*, which has already been recorded in this series.²

The British Government had repeatedly made the strongest possible representations to Japan through the Swiss Government. "Such replies as have been received have been evasive, cynical or otherwise unsatisfactory." We had had the right to expect that the Japanese Government, when once aware of the facts, would remedy this state of affairs. The Japanese knew what were the obligations of a civilized Power towards prisoners, as they had shown in their treatment of prisoners taken in the Russian War and in the war of 1914-18. "Let the Japanese Government reflect that in time to come the record of their military authorities in this war will not be forgotten."

On the same day an official report on Japanese atrocities to American soldiers was published in the United States. It told a ghastly story of how Japanese starved, tortured, and sometimes murdered American and Filipino soldiers taken at Bataan and Corregidor. Far more prisoners had died, mostly from starvation, than the Japanese had admitted. The report, which had been assembled by statements made by three U.S. officers, said that at Camp O'Donnell about 2,200 American

¹ Not one of Mr. Eden's best observations. It was only too easy to understand why no neutral inspection of the southern area was allowed. The military commanders had decided to work the prisoners to the bone and if they died, well, that was their fault for being taken prisoners. The Home Government were under the military thumb.

² *q.v.* *The Thirteenth Quarter*, p. 163.

prisoners had died in April and May, 1942. In Cabanatuan Camp alone about 3,000 had died up to the end of October, 1942, and the mortality among Filipino prisoners of war at Camp O'Donnell had been still heavier. Mr. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, in his Press Conference that day, denounced these barbarities. The United States Government was gathering all possible information on the subject, so that the war criminals might be punished when the war ended. The United States Government had made repeated protests, but to no purpose. They had conferred and collaborated with the British Government in all these matters. He summed up the present situation as follows :

First, the United States will persevere in what he termed a righteous undertaking to continue to exchange prisoners or civilian internees with Japan ; secondly, nobody in the United States had any accurate idea of how much chance there was of effecting these exchanges ; thirdly, the relief supplies for Allied prisoners held by the Japanese, which were delivered by the *Gripsholm* to the Japanese Government on the last repatriation exchange, about two months ago, had not been heard of since that time. Washington had been unable to find out whether they had been actually delivered to the prisoners.

From India came further evidence of atrocities. The Japanese were given to keeping diaries and these contained horrible admissions, e.g. the record that a captured Indian officer was dissected alive by the regimental medical officer for the amusement of an officers' mess. A similar fate befel an American airman, one of three forced down in Burma. The other two were cut in half. The treatment of Indian and British prisoners of war had been infinitely cruel and callous, and men who had escaped had told how of 300 prisoners taken at Yenangyaung only 115 survived the short journey to Rangoon. But enough of this painful record of barbarity.¹

4 : THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC

A. NEW GUINEA AND INDONESIA

By comparison with the operations described in the next subsection the campaign in New Guinea followed a

¹ All the more painful to one who remembers that it was the British Alliance that first placed Japan among the Great Powers.

straightforward course. At the end of 1943 one Australian column was advancing along the northern coast of the Huon Peninsula, pushing back a Japanese force amounting in strength to a weak division. Another column, after fighting its way down the valley of the Ramu, was trying to force the passage over the Finisterre mountains. On January 2 what was described as a "sizable" American force landed at Saidor, on the northern coast of New Guinea, approximately half-way between Finschafen and Madang, and thus cut in between the Japanese retreating before the Australians and their base at Madang. The Special Correspondent of *The Times* at A.H.Q., Australia, described the landing (*loc. cit.* January 4) as virtually unopposed. It was preceded, accompanied and followed by heavy air attacks on Japanese installations along the coast from Saidor, to Madang, 55 miles away, which effectively prevented any serious interference by air or otherwise with the landing of troops and stores. Telegraphing on January 5 the same Correspondent gave the following account of the situation at Saidor :

"Near their beach-head at Saidor . . . the Americans have captured an enemy supply dump, including ammunition, on the east side of the landing area, and their patrols are advancing beyond the perimeter of the defences around the airfield. The Americans have a firm hold on the coastline for three miles on each side of the landing-point and over an inland area of between eight and ten square miles. Their casualties on Sunday's landing comprised three dead, four wounded and two sailors drowned in the heavy surf. Eleven Japanese have been found dead and two have been made prisoner."

It was not until January 6 that American patrols advancing westwards from Saidor came into contact with Japanese troops 10 miles along the track to Madang. They extended their patrols to east and west of Saidor and had several successful encounters with small hostile forces. The Australians, 70 miles east of them on January 8, were fighting a series of actions with Japanese rearguards which put up a stiff resistance on the Ueneja River on January 9, and on the following day held a position south of the Buri River, two miles beyond the Ueneja, maintaining a heavy machine-gun and mortar fire until they were dislodged by a tank attack.

On January 13 A.H.Q. reported evidence that the Japanese caught between the Australians and the Americans at Saidor were trying to escape by sea, as the volume of their barge traffic indicated. On the night of January 9-10 Allied torpedo-boats caught a group of barges east of Saidor, sank nine and damaged 11 more, many of them full of troops. On the morning of January 17 news reached London from A.H.Q. that Sio, the chief stronghold on the enemy's line of retreat, had been occupied without fighting by the Australians on January 16. The Japanese had made a stand on the Kapagara River on January 12 and 13, but after evacuating this position under pressure they retreated at their best speed, leaving much material behind. The Special Correspondent of *The Times* wrote:

"The line of the Japanese retreat to Sio was littered with enemy dead and abandoned equipment, ammunition dumps and medical stores. Every prisoner taken and every body found showed signs of malnutrition. . . . The entire route was indescribably filthy.

The Japanese defeat is largely due to poor staff work and inability to keep forward troops supplied with stores, ammunition and medical requisites. . . . The great lesson of the campaign has been the effective use of tanks in a country which conventional tankmen declared to be tank-proof. . . ."

Most of the route to Sio had been fairly easy going for the Australians. But from Vincke Point, three miles beyond Sio, the grass-covered foothills gave place to more jungly and broken country and there were 60 streams to be forded before Saidor and the Americans, 52 miles along the coast to the north-west, were reached. Meanwhile, the Japanese had been reinforcing their aircraft in New Guinea as far as they could spare machines from the demands of the defence of Rabaul. On January 19 there was heavy air fighting.

"More than 100 Lightnings, Thunderbolts and Kittyhawks escorting 50 Liberators in a raid on Boram airfield met 50 enemy aircraft over Wewak. . . . They shot down 12 enemy fighters for the loss of three of their own machines. The engagement was continued for an hour with fighting going on from 26,000 to 6,000 feet. The Allied pilots reported that the Japanese were most skilled and most aggressive. The enemy fighters drawn off, the Liberators dropped 133 tons of explosives on the airfield in uninterrupted runs at 18,000 feet."

The next engagement was even more severe. On the morning of January 23, 50 Japanese fighters at a height of 30,000 feet awaited Liberators on their way to Wewak with 105 tons of bombs. They attacked one formation as it made its bombing run at 19,000 feet. The Liberators shot down 12 fighters for certain and their escort accounted for 21 more. Five Allied machines were brought down. Meanwhile Allied aircraft had been giving active support

to the Australians in the mountains between the Ramu Valley and Bogajim. Here the Australians had been working up the ridges that formed the watershed between the Ramu and the Upper Faria River. After their capture of "the Pimple," a mountain 4,800 feet high which dominated the range known as "Shaggy Ridge" on Christmas Day, they had to halt for a while to improve their supply lines, repair bridges washed away by rainstorms and bring up more artillery and mortars to tackle the strong positions ahead. On January 21, after several days of dive-bombing and strafing from the air, combined with heavy artillery and mortar barrages, they fought their way over extremely broken and difficult ground where precipitous slopes alternated with quagmires, cleared the Japanese from the northern end of Shaggy Ridge and established themselves on the Kankiryo Saddle above the heads of the Faria River. On January 23 they attacked again, capturing several guns and many machine-guns, and clearing the Kankiryo Saddle where 130 Japanese dead were counted. It was stated that they had used rocket guns with deadly effect and these weapons had also served the Americans well at Saidor, Arawe and Cape Gloucester. It was announced from A.H.Q. that when Liberators, Thunderbolts and Kittyhawks returned to Wewak on January 24 and started many fires on airfields and supply dumps, the Japanese sent up no fighters to intercept them.

On February 3 A.H.Q. reported that the remainder of the Japanese troops retreating west of Sio seemed to have broken up into small bodies, many of which had dispersed into the mountains and were attempting to make their way westward by detours. Some

"who tried to escape by sea have died in barges destroyed by Allied air and naval units. Others have fled into the passes and trails of the Finisterre Range, beyond which, if they succeed in crossing it, they will encounter the Australians holding the Markham and Ramu Valleys. . . . The Australians' drive on Monday (January 31) took them . . . within 30 miles of Saidor. It is expected that they will now push on and mop up all the remaining enemy troops—many of whose emaciated bodies they are finding—in the coastal trap until they reach the Americans at Saidor."

While the two Australian forces advanced General MacArthur mounted a series of air attacks on Wewak

which were little less successful than the great attack in the previous year.¹ The Japanese were once more building up a strong reserve of aircraft on the Wewak, Boram, But and Dagua airfields.

On February 3 "Wewak's air defences were overwhelmed by a series of raids which lasted an hour. Liberators opened the attack dropping 1,000-lb. and 2,000-lb. bombs on the Wewak and Boram runways and disposal areas, where twelve parked aeroplanes were destroyed. Lightnings then intercepted a formation of Zeros escorting six bombers," shooting several down, and Thunderbolts, though outnumbered, plunged into a formation of 40 machines and shot down eight. Next day the attack was renewed and over 100 tons of bombs were dropped on But and Dagua airfields. The attack encountered little opposition. More aircraft were destroyed and Marienburg on the coast was raided and many barges sunk or burnt. On February 5 Mitchell bombers attacked shipping at Hansa Bay, sinking a 1,000-ton cargo boat, a lugger and nine barges. They also left a merchantman ablaze at Wewak, sank five barges, destroyed or damaged two float-planes and shot up gun positions. The three days of raiding were believed to have put some 90 Japanese aircraft in the Wewak region either temporarily or permanently out of action.

On February 7 A.H.Q. reported that the Japanese troops nearest Saidor on the east were trying to escape westwards by a long and difficult trail on the seaward face of the Finisterre Range which would bring them to the Mot River, 13 miles west of Saidor.

There were several clashes between them and American patrols. On February 8 Australians and Americans joined hands at Yagomai, 14 miles east of Saidor. In his *communiqué* recording this success, General MacArthur described as ending a relentless pursuit of 130 miles over the most difficult country by A.I.F. troops and American engineers. He continued :

"The Japanese reinforced division, trapped, with its supply communication lines cut, with its way southward blocked by impassable mountain ranges, and our forces in the Ramu Valley, was gradually destroyed in its desperate efforts to break out westward. Starvation and disease, as well as constant air bombardment and continuous attacks by light naval units, supplemented the work of our ground forces. The aggregate strength of the Japanese amounted to 14,000 men, the great bulk of whom had been destroyed."

Between January 21 and February 10 the Australians had counted 1,000 Japanese dead on the line of their advance, of whom 600 had died of exhaustion or disease. Later some were killed and many more were found dead

¹ On the night of August 16-17, 1943, cf. *The Sixteenth Quarter*, Chapter V, Section 3B.

by the Allied troops in the desperately difficult mountain country inland from Saidor. A patrol found 80 bodies at the bottom of a 100-foot cliff. Hanging from its summit was a rope of native vines which the Japanese had tried to climb.

"After struggling part of the way up they had fallen to their death on the rocks below. . . . Some of the Japanese had obviously been unable to attempt the climb and had lain down among the other bodies to die." Another batch of 82 bodies was found in a clearing at the bottom of a razor-backed ridge. The exertion required to climb the ridge had apparently been too much for the men's strength, and they had collapsed and died in the clearing. (*The Times*, February 28.)

Fresh attempts by the Japanese to mass aircraft at Wewak provoked fresh Allied attacks, notably on February 24-26, when 10 aircraft were claimed as destroyed on the ground and 13 as damaged. Ten barges were also destroyed in these raids. On February 29 it was announced that the Americans were now 15 miles west of Saidor and that the Australians of the coastal force had hunted down and destroyed most of the Japanese who had taken refuge in the Finisterre Range between Sio and Saidor. Papuan infantry did good service in these operations as they had done in the Ramu Valley.

Early in March it appeared that the enemy, after his disagreeable experiences at Wewak, was concentrating his aircraft well to the eastward, and on March 3 and 4 the Hollandia, Sentani and Cyclops airfields in Dutch New Guinea were attacked, while Liberators, on March 4, destroyed 16 aircraft on the ground at But, near Wewak, and four more were destroyed by Allied fighters at Aitapa and Hansa Bay. These successes were followed by another American landing. The Special Correspondent of *The Times* reported from A.H.Q. (*loc cit.* March 8) :

"A small-scale landing on the north-east coast of New Guinea 30 miles west of Saidor on March 5, has taken the Americans three miles beyond Herwarth Point and to within about 25 miles from Bogadjim. In their five-mile advance to Herwarth from Kepler Point the Americans met only slight opposition. . . . The landing outflanks the enemy's positions at Mindiri, but the number of Japanese trapped is believed to be small."

The next heavy air raid on Wewak was made on March 11 when some 40 Japanese fighters went up to intercept a force of bombers strongly escorted by Thunder-

bolts which were attacking Boram airfield. The fighting ended in the complete defeat of the Japanese, who lost 26 machines, perhaps more, against two American machines destroyed. The 5th U.S.A.A.F. then dropped 120 tons of bombs on the airfield, destroying parked aircraft, igniting fuel dumps and silencing A.A. guns. On March 11 and 12 further attacks cost the enemy as many more aircraft, while only four Allied machines were lost. On March 13 the raiders found fewer interceptors out and eight out of about 30 were shot down without any Allied loss. These and other losses of aircraft incurred in the frequent bombardments of the Wewak group of airfields seem to have deterred the enemy from making as much use of them as he had done while the Allied forces were still in the Finschafen area and in the upper valley of the Ramu, and he preferred to "build up" his forces for air attack at the Hollandia base on the eastern boundary of Dutch New Guinea. There he was heavily attacked on March 30 and 31 by powerful forces of bombers, with fighter escort.

The operation was highly successful. The enemy had built up a reserve of 288 aircraft here. Of these only about 80 were believed to be serviceable after the attacks, which were the heaviest which Liberators had yet undertaken in the west of New Guinea from our advance airstrips. These enemy losses, A.H.Q. stated, were "not included in the total of 329 reported officially to have been destroyed in March for the loss of 23 Allied aeroplanes. The ratio of 14 to one compares with ratios of six to one in January and ten to one in February. Excluding the most recent Hollandia losses, the Japanese this year have lost more than 1,200 aircraft, compared with the Allied total loss of about 160."¹ The disproportion seemed to confirm the American view that the Japanese were being compelled by their losses and by Allied pressure to trust to numbers rather than to the quality of their pilots.

The vigour of the attack on the enemy's air arm did not prevent the American and Australian air squadrons from paying due attention to the enemy's barges and shipping off the New Guinea coast. A large number of barges and several merchantmen were disabled or destroyed, and on March 23 A.H.Q. announced the sinking of a Japanese destroyer and two cargo ships at Aitape. On March 18 a convoy of two troopships displacing together about 10,000 tons, with an escort of

¹ *The Times*, April 3.

three corvettes, was sighted and attacked 70 miles east of Hollandia. On March 19 the attack was resumed at 10 a.m. by over 100 bombers.

"Disregarding the A.A. fire from the corvettes they made their bombing runs from a minimum height, scoring many direct hits on all the vessels. Both troopships were soon sunk, and then the three corvettes. . . . Hundreds of troops and members of the ships' crews were seen struggling in the water with no chance of survival. . . . The convoy had some air cover, but it was insufficient. Two enemy fighters were shot down for the loss of three Allied aeroplanes." This action, which may have cost the enemy 2,000 lives, was fought 70 miles north-west of Wewak, for which the troops on board the transports were doubtless destined. On March 22 an air attack lasting more than two hours on Wewak harbour added two small freighters, seven coastal craft and 23 barges to the list of lost Japanese shipping. Many buildings were wrecked and only one Allied fighter was lost, shot down by heavy A.A. fire.¹

During these coastal operations, the Australians in the Ramu Valley, after establishing themselves firmly on the watershed, had been fighting their way down through the Mintjim Valley towards Daumoina, the terminus of the 30-mile winding motor-road which the Japanese had constructed from their coastal base at Bogajim, about ten miles south of Madang. Japanese opposition and the difficulties of the country delayed their advance, but on March 14 they took Daumoina. On March 18 their patrols made contact with American forward patrols 45 miles west of Saidor, and by the end of March Allied patrols had reached within three miles of Bogadjim.

For the first time since the beginning of the war with Japan, official reference was made to Australo-Dutch military co-operation in Dutch New Guinea. On February 2 A.H.Q. announced a clash on the Eilanden River on the south coast, some 200 miles west of the Dutch border.

An Allied patrol had "penetrated 240 miles beyond Merauke, to within 140 miles of the Japanese base at Kaukenau. The Japanese in three barges were moving up the river. . . . They were met by withering fire from the

¹ A surprising incident was recorded by the Special Correspondent of *The Times*, at A.H.Q., Australia (*loc. cit.* March 27), who wrote: "During the final stage of the destruction of the convoy near Wewak a week ago two flights of Bostons attacked a cargo boat from mast height. The first flight caused a violent explosion on board the cargo boat, and the second flight passed through the falling debris. Returning to base the crew of one of the Bostons found the ship's register lodged behind its engine. It revealed that the cargo boat was the *Taipei-maru* of 3,221 tons, with British registration dated November 30, 1936."

Australians and Dutch and fled down the stream. Later, five more barges were sighted, and after a short skirmish they also fled. Sixty Japanese were killed or wounded, but we are reported to have had no casualties."

Although the main weight of the Allied air offensive was directed against the enemy's bases and shipping in the south-western and central Pacific areas during this quarter, the enemy's strongholds in the captured Dutch East Indies were not neglected. The following are the chief operations recorded by A.H.Q., Australia :

Early in January Koepang was attacked and two freighters were sunk. On January 10 A.H.Q. announced a successful raid on the Kendari air base in Celebes, and on January 14 it recorded a round trip of 2,000 miles by American long-range bombers which raided Macassar in Celebes and Balikpapan in Borneo. Attacks on targets in Timor were recorded on February 12. On March 15 Liberators attacked Surabaya by night. The raid completely surprised the Japanese who had not "blacked-out" and did much damage. On the same night Denpasar aerodrome on Bali was bombed. On March 18 Liberators again raided Surabaya and left great fires in the dockyard and arsenal area. The quarter closed with attacks on the Penfoeli airfield, Timor, on March 30 and 31, and on Koepang on March 31.

B. ISOLATING RABAU

The American capture of Cape Gloucester in New Britain and its two airstrips did not end the fighting in the western extremity of that long island. On New Year's Day the American Marines extended their beach-head for a mile and a half beyond the airstrips and found over 1,000 enemy dead. On January 3 their long-range aircraft raided Kavieng in New Ireland and hit two large cruisers and two destroyers there. Another raiding force bombed Rabaul, shot down 13 enemy fighters over the town and harbour and claimed the destruction of 19 more on the airfields. On January 4 the enemy made another attempt on the Cape Gloucester beach-head, to be thrown back with the loss of 600 killed. The Japanese, according to American war correspondents, began by attacking the marines' defences south-east of Silimati Point, but were sharply repulsed, suffering heavily from the fire of artillery and tanks, and the Americans then passed to the offensive and forced them back in the direction of Borgen Bay. A British Army observer with the

Marines noted that there were indications that many of the Japanese troops had never seen tanks before, which might explain why they tried to stop them by bayonet charges ! On the same day Kavieng in New Ireland and Launai aerodrome near Rabaul were heavily and successfully attacked by air. A.H.Q., Australia, reported that

Two Japanese destroyers were caught in Kavieng harbour by carrier-based aircraft from the South Pacific zone on the morning of January 4. A number of 1,000-lb. bombs and several torpedoes hit both vessels, which were left crippled. Between 20 and 30 aircraft came up to intercept the attackers and two of these were shot down, as were a bomber and six fighters apparently just arriving in the area. One Allied aircraft was lost and several were damaged. On the same day another force raided Rabaul, making the Launai aerodrome its target. Some 30 Japanese fighters came up and lost ten of their number against one Allied Corsair. Australian Catalinas bombed Kavieng on January 4-5 for the sixteenth successive night, making Panapani aerodrome one of their chief targets ; and early on January 5 a Catalina caught a submarine chaser in Keravia Bay, Rabaul, and scored a direct hit.

The American advance from Cape Gloucester made slow progress. Several Japanese counter-attacks were repulsed with loss and the Americans identified the 45th Japanese Infantry Brigade, which had fought at Bataan, as the core of the opposing force. Their immediate objective was Borgen Bay on the northern coast of New Britain, about seven miles beyond Cape Gloucester, but the country was very difficult and the Japanese fought well. On January 11 they attempted to land near Cape Gloucester from barges which had moved along the coast by night, lying hidden in creeks and mangrove swamps by day, but the attempt was defeated by American artillery and several barges full of troops were sunk. An attempt to reinforce the troops at Borget Bay was also detected and defeated and two barges full of soldiers were sunk by gunfire. The enemy, however, was strongly entrenched on Hill 660, an outlier of the main position at Borgen Bay, and it was not until January 14 that the Marines captured the crest. Next day they cleared its eastern slopes. The American force at Arawe, which had contented itself with holding its positions for the best part of a month (*q.v. The Seventeenth Quarter*, Chapter V, Section 3B), now attacked the enemy's positions east of the

American trenches. The troops engaged in this successful operation included Red Indian soldiers. They killed 139 Japanese.

"Elements of the 158th Infantry, trained in the Panama jungle, made the attack. They had been secretly landed at Arawe in support of the dismounted Texan cavalry who established the original beach-head on December 15. The Indians were in the leading assault force. The American casualties were reported to be light. . . . The attack cleared an area of 1,000 yards beyond the American perimeter. Twenty-eight machine-gun nests were destroyed and a portion of a field battery was captured. . . . Japanese coastal traffic east of Arawe was also harassed by Allied air and sea forces, and barges and laden boats were destroyed."

The capture of Hill 660 was not followed by any rapid advance eastward. The Japanese were still holding strong positions east of the head of Borgen Bay, and they were unquestionably receiving supplies and drafts by barge from their positions in the Willaumez Peninsula. The Americans were not attempting to advance along the coast of New Britain to Rabaul. The jungle and mountains made such an enterprise impossible, save at an inordinate expenditure of effort. Their object was to keep the Japanese at arm's length from the aerodromes which they had seized and were improving, while their aircraft based on the Solomons continued to keep Rabaul, its harbour and its airfields under constant attack. On January 20 Rear-Admiral Robert Carnley, Chief of Staff of the South Pacific Command, made an important statement to the Press. Rabaul and Kavieng (New Ireland) were the next obvious points of Japanese strength and the south and south-west Pacific commands were pushing along their respective axes to eliminate them.

The Japanese, he continued, might attempt to evacuate Rabaul if it became untenable. In any event, by the co-ordination of our air and sea forces we could blockade the enemy's forces in New Britain and New Ireland, which might total 100,000.¹ The Americans would starve the enemy out of Bougainville Island, in the Solomons, and it was not logical to permit the Japanese much longer to occupy Nauru, which was the salient in our offensive arc from the Gilberts to the Solomons.

Under continuous cover we had completed three airfields at Empress Augusta Bay, on Bougainville. With our air support we now controlled the sea well north of Buka Island, and the enemy had been forced to resort to night barge traffic between New Ireland and Buka for the evacuation and supply of his troops. He not only was not getting enough to wage an

¹ Other estimates gave the enemy a strength of 50,000-60,000 on these islands.

offensive, but we would actually starve him out as at Kolombangara. In effect we had surrounded the whole island by our landing. The Japanese had abandoned all attempts to use the Buka and Bougainville airfields, and only a few float planes were operated from the area.

We were now conducting round-the-clock raids on Rabaul, including mast-height attacks on shipping and installations. The Japanese had retaliated with a few puny raids on New Georgia. Their efforts to maintain contact with Buka had been soundly punished, especially by our destroyers, and Buka had now become a liability. Our method of putting Rabaul and Kavieng out of business would be something the enemy least expected and not in accordance with any familiar pattern.

These attacks on Rabaul continued almost without a day's or a night's intermission throughout the month, and they were combined with raids on Kavieng and the enemy's bases in the Admiralty Islands. It is impossible in the compass of this section to mention more than a few outstanding incidents recorded by A.H.Q., Australia.

On January 9 the Japanese lost 16 machines to the Allied four, and an announcement from A.H.Q. on January 17 recorded the destruction of 29 more against ten during a raid on the harbour, when two warships were damaged, as were seven merchantmen. A later report announced a successful attack on a convoy on the night of January 15 when a 10,000-ton merchantman was heavily hit and was seen almost submerged next day, and two good-sized ships were set ablaze by Catalinas off New Ireland. A report received on January 20 recorded the destruction of three merchantmen and 18 Japanese aircraft for the loss of 12 Allied machines at Rabaul. On January 22 the destruction of 18 Japanese aircraft paid for the loss of eight Allied aeroplanes over Rabaul. On January 23, 46 were shot down there for five Allied machines, and 17 A.A. gun positions were silenced. Next day torpedo aircraft took up the attack and sank five cargo ships in harbour, while their escort destroyed 24 enemy aircraft. It was understood that official returns showed the enemy to have lost 246 aircraft over Rabaul or on the airfields there between January 1 and 26 against an Allied loss of 55. The 26th attack on Rabaul (on January 28) since the New Year made an end of another 45 Japanese aircraft against ten Allied machines, and General MacArthur's official report for the month claimed that more hostile aircraft had been destroyed in the south-west Pacific theatre than in any previous month. The number definitely destroyed in all theatres from the Solomons to New Guinea was 546 against 97 Allied aircraft, and the Japanese had suffered a certain loss of four auxiliary warships, 24 merchantmen and 172 barges and small craft, while nearly 150 vessels were damaged.

Yet in spite of their heavy losses by sea and air the Japanese continued to send ships to Rabaul and to reinforce their air squadrons there. The ships may have gone to evacuate troops rather than to bring fresh drafts, but the dispatch of aircraft to New Britain rather suggested that the enemy wished to hold Rabaul as long as possible. He cannot, however, have had any hope of relieving the

islands. A Tokyo broadcast to the Japanese people on January 29 said :

"The situation at Rabaul has reached a serious stage for which we cannot hold even the slightest optimism. . . . The enemy is directing attacks against Rabaul daily, with formations consisting on the average of 100 bomber and fighter aeroplanes." It was an unusual confession for an official spokesman !

His reinforcements by air had two ways of reaching Rabaul. Long-range aircraft could fly from Japan by way of the mandated islands, including Truk, and thence by the Admiralties, where the enemy had airfields at Momote and Lorengau, to Kavieng and Rabaul. Fighters could reach the airfields at Wewak and Madang from the numerous aerodromes in the captured Dutch islands and thence fly by way of the Admiralty Islands to Rabaul, even after the loss of Cape Gloucester and its airfields. But they could not carry more than dribbles of petrol by air to Rabaul, and the loss of tankers and transports was threatening the enemy with the immobilization of his remaining air strength in this region. The campaign in the Marshall Islands in February (*q.v.* the next section of this chapter) did not result in any weakening of the attack on Rabaul in February. After a short intermission of bombing caused by bad weather two powerful attacks were made on Rabaul on February 3 when 13 Japanese aircraft were felled, and on February 5 the total number of Japanese aeroplanes seen on the four aerodromes in the Rabaul region or in the air was only 100, about half the usual number maintained there. By this time, too, the enemy in the Borgen Bay area was withdrawing. He had probably 4,000 killed and wounded in the actions in this region ; sickness was rife among his troops and he may have found it hard to supply them by barge.

The Special Correspondent of *The Times* at A.H.Q. telegraphed on February 7 that the line of the American penetration in western New Britain described a semi-circle from the Natamo River near Borgen Bay to Sagsag, on the Dampier Strait. In nine days the Americans advancing in three columns had cleared 100 square miles, and next day their patrols had reached Cape Gauffre, nine miles east of Natamo Point. On February 9 the same correspondent described the march of a column inland, south-east of Cape Gloucester, over the mountains between the Talawe volcano, which was showing signs of activity, and Mount Tangi. This move was

presumably made in connection with the north-westward advance of part of the Arawe force. On February 6 over 150 Allied aircraft attacked Lakunai airfield, Rabaul, dropping 124 tons of bombs and bringing down 13 Japanese aircraft out of about 60 which sought to intercept them. On February 8 more than 200 aircraft attacked Tobera airfield, Rabaul. The Dauntless and Avenger bombers scored many hits on gun positions and runways and the escort of Corsairs, Wildcats and Hellcats destroyed 11 Japanese machines without loss to themselves. On February 9 and 10 there were still heavier attacks and 52 Japanese aircraft were shot down against six Allied machines.

A report from A.H.Q. received early on February 15 showed that the Cape Gloucester force had made further progress. Its left column had reached Corissi near Cape Mensing on Rottok Bay, 21 miles east of the beach-head. This area and the country round Borgen Bay were cleared during the next four days. Meanwhile, the troops moving through the mountains farther to the south fought a successful action which made an end of organized Japanese resistance in this part of New Britain. On February 24 it was announced that they had linked up on the Itni River with army units which had struck north-west from Arawe.

On February 11 American aircraft from the Solomons dropped 134 tons of bombs on Vunapope airfield near Rabaul and had force to spare for raids on Tobera and Vunakanau airfields and for the harbour, where they sank six barges. Next day it was the turn of Lakunai, where seven out of 55 intercepting Zeros were brought down for three Allied machines, of Kavieng, where 147 tons of bombs were dropped, and of Momote airfield in the Admiralties. The next heavy attack on Kavieng by Mitchells and Bostons escorted by Lightnings encountered very heavy A.A. fire on February 15. Eight machines were shot into the sea, but 15 members of their crews were rescued by the pilot of a U.S. Navy Catalina who landed four times on the harbour under heavy fire to pick them up. A 3,000-ton cargo ship, three coasters, several small craft and two floatplanes were destroyed by the Americans.

A brilliant success against a large Japanese convoy followed. It was sighted by a Liberator about 100 miles north-west of Kavieng and 25 miles from the Massau Islands in the Bismarck Archipelago late on February 15. It was attacked at midnight. A.H.Q. thus described its subsequent destruction :

"Our medium bombers continued their assault on a south-bound convoy attempting to reinforce the enemy's Bismarck bases. Striking at mast height in successive attacks, we sank a 7,500-ton tanker, five cargo ships of 2,000 tons each, a 500-ton freighter and two escorting corvettes. Enemy personnel casualties were heavy.

With losses listed yesterday of an 8,000-ton tanker, a 6,000-ton transport, three 1,500-ton cargo ships, and an escorting destroyer, this brings the total to 12 merchant vessels of an aggregate tonnage of 36,500 tons and three small escorting warships. This is believed to have comprised practically the whole convoy."

The week was to end as disastrously for the enemy as it had begun. After the destruction of the convoy, which

must have been attended by heavy loss of life, on February 16, the American aircraft turned to attack Rabaul on the 17th, when dive-bombers and torpedo-bombers 150 strong scored hits on 12 ships in harbour and were believed to have sunk a tanker and four 1,000-ton cargo ships. Two destroyers were damaged. Of 50 Japanese fighters which attacked the bombers, eight were shot down. Four Allied aeroplanes did not return.

There was more to come. Early on February 18 one group of U.S. destroyers attacked Rabaul and another, Kavieng. The attack on Rabaul was delivered in relays. The first formation silenced the Simpson Harbour batteries and set the port buildings on fire. Later formations attacked Keravia Bay, hitting several ships moored there. A destroyer steamed out of the harbour but was discouraged by several hits and returned. At Kavieng the batteries at North Cape were soon silenced, an aeroplane which attempted to intervene was driven off, and a large tanker was hit amidships and exploded. About a dozen other ships, mostly small craft, were damaged.

The week ended with the defeat on February 19 and 20 of yet another convoy which was caught by Allied aircraft in the Bismarck Sea and destroyed or dispersed. Six medium-sized merchant ships, a corvette and two gunboats were sunk and three freighters were "probably destroyed." On February 19 another raid on Rabaul accounted for 15 more Japanese aircraft without any Allied loss, and 26 more were shot down there on the following day. The enemy's losses in this area during the week totalled 44 ships and 164 aircraft.

Raids on Rabaul continued. A third attempt to run the blockade was made by two cargo ships escorted by a destroyer and two gunboats. They were caught by Mitchells on February 21 while steaming 22 miles north-west of Cape Matalanem, New Hanover Island, off the north-western extremity of New Ireland. Both cargo ships were set on fire and abandoned, and one gunboat sank. During the last days of February Japanese air strength at Rabaul seemed to have diminished, less shipping than usual was seen in the harbour, and on occasion, e.g. the attack on February 22, when eight ships in the harbour were damaged, and the heavy raids on airfields on February 24 and 25, no attempt at interception was made. Nor did the enemy's aircraft there or at Kavieng or, apparently, in the Admiralty Islands, attack the American destroyer flotillas which again bombarded Rabaul Harbour and shelled shipping and batteries at Kavieng twice more before the month was up. Another

sign of the decline of Japanese strength was the success of a destroyer sweep through the waters north of the Bismarck Archipelago¹ on February 22. A *communiqué* from A.H.Q., Australia, stated that :

The destroyers ranging well north of the Bismarcks first encountered a 3,500-ton transport carrying troops and northward bound² which they sank by gunfire in a few minutes. The Americans rescued 73 survivors of the 400 Japanese in this vessel, of whom two died of wounds and one committed suicide. Later they met an old-type destroyer which attempted escape, but was sunk. The destroyers then split into two groups, one going east and one west of Hanover Island. The western group sank a large Japanese freighter and several small craft. The other group shelled Kavieng, where shore batteries returned their fire. Late that night the western group crossed St. George's Channel between Rabaul and New Ireland and shelled an enemy airfield and installations on Duke of York Island. No air opposition was met.

While the main American effort in these regions had been concentrated against Rabaul, the Japanese in the Solomons were not neglected. To prevent small craft reaching the enemy's base on Buka Island off the northern tip of Bougainville, a force of American and New Zealand troops occupied the Green Islands, 50 miles north-north-west of Buka, and 120 miles east of Rabaul, on February 14. General MacArthur commented :

"For strategic military purposes this completes the campaign in the Solomons." The Japanese, he added, were in a hopeless position there, facing starvation or surrender. The General's Headquarters issued the following important statement : "We have seized the northern end of the Solomons archipelago. New Zealand and American troops, covered by naval and air forces, landed on and occupied the Green Islands. Enemy ground resistance was negligible and his air reaction³ weak. Thus culminates the series of flank movements which began in the New Georgia group and has gradually enveloped all enemy forces in the Solomons.

"These forces, estimated at 22,000 strong, dispersed through Choiseul, Shortland, Bougainville and Buka Islands, are now isolated from their sources of supply at Rabaul. Starvation and disease are certain to ensue from the blockade which renders their position hopeless. With their airfields destroyed and their barge traffic paralysed, the relief of these scattered garrisons is no longer practicable and their ultimate fate is sealed. For all strategic military purposes this completes the campaign in the Solomon Islands."

Before this operation the Americans, besides putting the airfields on Bougainville Island, near Empress Augusta

¹ i.e., New Britain, New Ireland and the smaller adjacent islands.

² Which suggested an attempt at evacuation of troops supernumerary to the main defence of the islands.

³ This seems to have been confined to one attack by 15 dive-bombers, six of which were shot down.

Bay, into working order, had established a bomber airfield on Treasury Island south of Bougainville. From these airfields their pilots need only fly 300 miles to reach Rabaul and Kavieng, and the reconditioning of the Cape Gloucester airfields gave them a base only 275 miles from that target. During January activity on Bougainville had been restricted, but in February the American garrison of the Empress Augusta Bay beach-head began to extend its perimeter. It was stated on February 3 that they had stormed 20 "pillboxes," killing 80 Japanese, in an attack in which the advance of the infantry and tanks was preceded by a 30-minute barrage. On February 1 Japanese troops on beaches on Choiseul Island were shelled by U.S. destroyers which also engaged shore batteries near the Buka passage. The Japanese on Bougainville appear to have withdrawn their troops from the southern extremity of the island, hoping, perhaps, to evacuate some of them by barge. It was stated that during the third week in February, 21 barges had been destroyed from the air at Matchin Bay and in the Buka passage, and that American ground troops probing into the interior from their beach-head had killed over 120 of the enemy in patrol encounters. There was also evidence that the Japanese commander on Bougainville was concentrating his forces for an attack on the beach-head, but this did not develop until the second week of March.

Before this the Americans had opened their campaign against the Admiralty Islands, where the capture of harbours and airfields would further strengthen their air and sea blockade of Rabaul and Kavieng. The following summary of reports from A.H.Q. records the principal events of a brief and highly successful campaign :

The first landing was made on Los Negros, an island separated from Manus Island, the largest of the Admiralty group, by a narrow strait, on February 29. It had been designed as a reconnaissance in force composed of 1,000 men of the First Cavalry Division with a four-gun mountain battery and one of A.A. guns. The sea was rough and the steep rocky shores of Los Negros made Hyäne harbour, on the east coast, the only possible landing place. Covered by fire from the American destroyers, the landing barges entered the harbour under a hot fire from guns on the headlands at its entrance, which fortunately was at first ill-directed.

The Japanese were surprised and their garrison was greatly scattered. By entering Hy ne harbour the attackers were able to land on the Momote airstrip which fringes its southern beach. The second group of barges drew heavier fire, but the destroyers had now closed in and the batteries were silenced. The first troops ashore established a beach-head at the northern end of the landing strip and dug in. The next contingent landed at the same point, but attacked and carried the western defences of the airstrip. Mountain and A.A. guns and heavy machine-guns were quickly landed and in two hours' time the Americans had captured the whole airstrip and established a beach-head 5,000 yards inland.

The Japanese counter-attack came at 4 a.m. on the following morning on a narrow front. It was repulsed with loss, but the Japanese seem to have received reinforcements from Manus Island, the strait between which and Los Negros can be crossed on foot at low tide, and they renewed their attacks supported by mortar fire throughout the night of March 1-2. But the Americans held their positions, and on March 2 strong reinforcements arrived. There was sporadic fighting that night and on March 3 at dusk the enemy

"launched a series of attacks which lasted all night. Time after time they hurled themselves against the American line in their fanatical . . . efforts to reach the airfield and there was hand-to-hand fighting at each of its approaches." The official report described the action as "one of the fiercest of the Pacific war." The Japanese losses were estimated at 3,000 killed and wounded, and the Americans, who lost 61 killed and 244 wounded, buried 700 enemy dead on the western perimeter of the airfield alone (*The Times*, March 6).

The Japanese had suffered too heavily to renew the attack. Their positions in rear of the front were heavily bombed and American aircraft kept the aerodrome at Lorengau on Manus Island under constant observation and frequent attack. On March 6 the Americans thrust westwards from their positions at Momote and reached Sea-Eagle (See-Adler) Bay. The Japanese batteries in the interior of Los Negros which included 4.7-in. guns were silenced. Advancing steadily and methodically to the west the Americans drove the Japanese either across the strait into Manus Island or into the swampy country in the south of Los Negros where they were powerless. On March 12 the invaders seized the islands of Hauwei and Butjo Luo within Sea Eagle Harbour, killing a few Japanese on Hauwei, but finding Butjo Luo

unoccupied, and landed artillery on them to prepare the assault on Lorengau.

On March 15 American troops landed on Manus Island a mile and a half from Lorengau aerodrome under cover of a heavy air attack and a vigorous bombardment of the enemy's coastal positions by destroyers and torpedo craft. In spite of the enemy's land mines and booby traps the landing force made ground quickly. Part pressed towards the airfield, part thrust southward and inland and after capturing several machine-gun nests wheeled eastward to join in the attack on the airfield. Tanks were brought ashore and their advance and the fire of the destroyers facilitated the capture of the airfield after sharp fighting on March 16. The enemy still fought on in the town, which was protected by a chain of bunkers and pill-boxes, but on the evening of March 17 the Americans broke into the town. The remnants of the garrison retired into the interior. On the coast the garrison of Pityilo Island within Sea Eagle Harbour alone held out and was not reduced until March 24.

This virtually concluded the campaign in the Admiralty Islands, though some parties of enemy troops remained at large in the interior and a few small islands were left to be "collected" by the Americans. As an official report issued on March 1 had stated, the aim of the landings in these islands had been to complete "the final stage in the great swinging move pivoting on New Guinea, which has been the basic purpose of operations initiated on June 29, 1943, when the south-west and south Pacific areas were united under General MacArthur's command."

"The axis of the advance," continued the report, "has thereby been changed from north to westward. This relieves our supply line of the constant threat of flank attack which has been present since the beginning of the Papuan campaign. This line, previously so precariously exposed, is now firmly secured, not only by air coverage, but also by our own front to which it is now perpendicular. The operation has been a delicate one, and its final success lays a strategically firm foundation for the future."

The report added that the capture of the Admiralty Group would tighten the blockade of the remaining bases of the enemy whose supply lines "are definitely and conclusively severed," and for whom "only a minimum of blockade running by submarine or individual surface craft is now possible." In addition to the garrison of the Solomons some 50,000 men "largely in New Britain and at Rabaul are now enclosed. Their situation has now become precarious and their ultimate fate is certain. . . ."

The Americans rounded off their victory in the Admiralties by capturing Emirau and Elomusau Islands in the St. Matthias group, north-west of New Ireland, on March 20. Emirau which has ground suitable for airstrips is 680 miles from Truk, which was thus brought within bombing range from the south. The opposition was speedily broken by the naval and air forces which covered the landing and the Marines overcame the small garrison with slight loss. During the operation battleships and other vessels bombarded Kavieng for three hours, doing great damage and silencing the shore batteries.

Meanwhile there had been sharp fighting in New Britain and at the American beach-head on Bougainville. On March 6 a force of U.S. Marines drawn from the 32nd Division landed near Talasea aerodrome, on the Willaumez Peninsula on the northern coast of New Britain. At the same time A.H.Q. reported that the Japanese troops had decamped from their positions west of Arawe and that patrols had reached Amgoring, 24 miles east of Arawe, without encountering any important opposition. On the Willaumez Peninsula Japanese thrusts at the Marines' beach-head were repulsed, and on March 10 it was announced that the airstrip and village of Talasea, which are at the base of the Willaumez Peninsula, had been captured. This gave the Americans an advanced airfield only 160 air miles from Rabaul, which was occasionally bombarded and constantly bombed. More barges carrying Japanese troops were destroyed or damaged by American and Australian aircraft.

During these operations the Japanese Commander on Bougainville had undertaken two unsuccessful offensives against the American beach-head at Empress Augusta Bay, or, as it was called since its extension, "the Torokina position." The first attack, in which the Japanese used their artillery exceptionally competently,¹ lasted from March 8 to March 15. The enemy broke into the north-east of the perimeter on March 12, but his spear-head was cut off and destroyed. American negro troops saw action for the first time in this war here. A Fijian battalion which had greatly distinguished itself in previous battles on the Solomons added to its laurels.

The repulse, however, did not deter the Japanese commander from renewing his attacks. Dispatches from A.H.Q., Australia, showed that he had had brought up reinforcements from the south of the island, though geographical difficulties made it impossible for him to get substantial aid from the north; and the American command suspected that he considered better to lose his men in battle than by slow starvation. His second attack, on March 23 and 24, was again defeated after a preliminary success, and the Americans buried 300 of the attackers in and near their lines. They had only 52 casualties in this action. As the enemy was frequently attacked

¹ On Guadalcanal the Japanese mortars had been far better served than their guns.

by dive-bombers whose pilots paid special attention to his gun-positions, and since his lines were repeatedly shelled by field and naval guns, his losses probably greatly exceeded the 1,173 dead whom the defenders buried after the first repulse.

So three months of continuous fighting throughout the south-west Pacific area ended with Rabaul and Kavieng isolated, with the Japanese in the northern Solomons threatened with starvation and with the garrisons of northern New Guinea in little better case. American sea power had triumphed, but the point where it had been exercised decisively lies outside these southern waters. The operations of a great American armada in the Central Pacific and their consequences will be described in the final section of this chapter.

NOTE.—For a reference to the principal ships of the Royal Australian Navy which took part in these operations in the south-west Pacific during this quarter *see* Chapter XII.

5 : THE CENTRAL AND NORTH PACIFIC

While they pressed their air attacks on the Japanese strongholds in the south-west Pacific from Wewak to Kavieng and Rabaul, the Americans maintained a steady and increasing air offensive against the Japanese garrisons and installations in the Marshall Islands. They paid particular attention to the aerodromes on Wotje and at Taroa, in the Maloelap atoll, and to shipping and port facilities at the anchorages of Mili and Jaluit. On January 4 it was officially stated that since Christmas Eve 116 Japanese aircraft had been destroyed in these islands, some in air combats but the majority on the ground or on the enemy's sea-plane anchorages. The Americans had only lost 12 machines. The enemy retorted by nuisance raids against the Gilbert Islands on January 2, 10 and 11, which did no damage to be set off against that wrought by Navy Liberators when they attacked Kwajalein atoll on January 11 and sank two coasters, damaging four others and causing a number of fires on shore. On January 29 an official spokesman broadcasting to the Japanese people from Tokyo, gave a gloomy picture of the situation at Rabaul where the enemy "is

directing daily attacks with formations averaging 100 bomber and fighter aeroplanes," and continued thus :

"In the meantime the enemy continues his raids over the Marshall Islands, the right wing of the Rabaul stronghold, with an average of ten land-based bombers, sometimes mixed with fighter aircraft, in an attempt to divert our attention."

This complete misreading of the American plan of campaign must have delighted Admiral Nimitz who issued the following brief statement from his H.Q. at Pearl Harbour on the same day :

"The Pacific fleet carrier force have made attacks on Marshall Island bases to-day, including Taroa, Wotje and Kwajalein." No further details were given save that radio silence was being observed. The belief that some large-scale operation was being carried out was confirmed when Tokyo, on January 30, admitted that Japanese "army and navy units" had intercepted strong hostile forces which had been attacking the Marshalls, and the belief that the operation had been highly successful was strengthened next day when Tokyo again referred to "heavy fighting," without claiming any success for Japanese arms. From Admiral Nimitz came no more than an amplification of his statement of January 29, and an announcement that carrier aircraft had "extended their operations to include the bombing of Eniwetok"—an air base, 375 miles from Kwajalein, and at the north-western extremity of the Marshall Islands—and that "U.S. surface ships had bombarded the same objectives" as the carrier-borne aircraft had bombed on Kwajalein, Roi, Maloelap and Wotje.

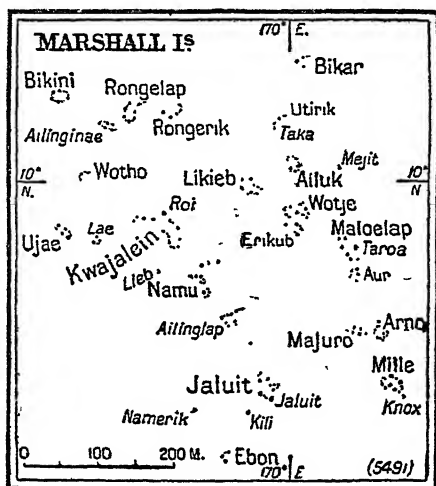
On February 1 great news cheered the people of the United States. Powerful American forces had landed successfully on islands in the Kwajalein atoll, with the support of powerful naval squadrons. The first official statement issued by Admiral Nimitz was unexpectedly full. It ran :

Powerful forces of all types, commanded by Vice-Admiral R. A. Spruance, U.S. Navy, have begun operations, the objective of which is the capture of the Marshall Islands. After an intensive preliminary bombardment of enemy installations by carrier-based aircraft and by battleship and light surface units, Army and Marine assault forces have initially established beach-heads on islands in the vicinity of Roi and Kwajalein Islands in the Kwajalein atoll. Installations on Wotje and Maloelap atolls were heavily bombarded by carrier aircraft and surface forces."

The *communiqué* went on to say that all amphibious operations were being directed by Rear-Admiral R. K. Turner, U.S.N., and that the assault troops were directed by Major-General H. M. Smith, U.S. Marine Corps. The landing attacks in the Roi Island area were being made by troops of the 4th Marine Division, commanded by Major-General Harry Schmidt, U.S. Marine Corps, while the landings in the Kwajalein group were being made by troops of the 7th Infantry Division under Major-General Charles H. Corlett, U.S. Army. Strong opposition was being encountered, but American casualties were moderate. Supporting air attacks were being

made by carrier task forces at Kwajalein, Maloelap, Mili, Wetwok (Emwetok) and Jaluit, and also on Wake Island. These forces were commanded by Rear-Admiral M. A. Mitscher, U.S.N., units of the 7th Army Air Force commanded by Major-General Willis Hale, and units of Fleet Air Wing No. 2 under Rear-Admiral John D. Price were also engaged in these supporting attacks. All shore-based aircraft in the Gilberts were operating under the command of Rear-Admiral John H. Hoover, commander of the aircraft of the Central Pacific Force.

The attacks made rapid progress. During the three days of air and naval bombardment which preceded the



landing on January 31 the northern assault forces claimed to have shot down 18 aircraft in combat and to have destroyed or damaged 51 on the ground. By nightfall on February 1 the Marines had taken the Roi airfield and only a small force was left fighting on Namur Island. On February 3 Admiral Nimitz announced the capture of Namur Island and several adjacent islands, from some of which, it was afterwards stated, the Marines had "taken off" in their first attacks on Namur and Roi. At Kwajalein, Admiral Nimitz added, resistance continued, but "we have landed troops and mechanized equipment in force and are proceeding with the annihilation of the enemy." Here the 7th Division had used similar tactics

to the Marines, first landing on the islets of Ninni, Ennulabegan, Ennubuj and Gea—the last by mistake—in the dark and then landing on the main island of Kwajalein covered by a terrific fire. Dazed and shaken though they were by the blast of bombs and shells up to 16-in. calibre the Japanese nevertheless fought most stubbornly and fanatically, as they had done in previous island battles. It took the 7th Division, themselves veterans of Attu, four days to complete their capture of Kwajalein, a two-and-a-half-mile-long strip of coral. The Correspondent of *The Times* at New York, telegraphing on February 6, said of the Japanese :

“They fought on fanatically, sniping in the daytime, trying to infiltrate into the American lines at night, and often allowing American patrols to pass them in their hiding-places so that they might attack them from the rear. There were still left to them many usable remnants of inter-connected concrete blockhouses, and these it was necessary to blast out systematically, the attackers using T.N.T. grenades, flame-throwers, rifles, and machine-guns. Again and again the American soldiers were forced to advance to the very doors of blockhouses to clear them of enemy snipers.” (*The Times*, February 7.)

The capture of Kwajalein Island was virtually complete on February 5. By February 6 Ebeye and Loi Islands in the same atoll were also taken. Both were of some military importance, notably Ebeye, where there was a seaplane base, equipped with hangars, shops and a W.T. station. Gugegwe, another fortified island, four and a half miles north of Loi, was next attacked and its garrison overpowered and destroyed. The capture of Bigej Island, like Gugegwe on the eastern side of the atoll, and of Ebler Island on the western side, completed the Kwajalein operations, the termination of which was announced on February 8. On the previous day the Navy Department had announced that the American casualties in the seven days' fighting were far below those sustained by the defeated Japanese, who were almost literally annihilated.

The casualties suffered by the force which took Kwajalein were 157 killed, 712 wounded and 17 missing. The Japanese there lost 4,650 dead and 173 prisoners. Of the attacking force of Marines which took Roi and Namur and other neighbouring islands and islets 129 were killed, 436 were wounded and 65 were missing, against a Japanese loss of 3,472 dead and 91 prisoners. The American losses therefore totalled 1,516, the Japan-

ese 8,122. No figures were given for Japanese wounded, and it seems improbable that any were left. The small proportion of Japanese prisoners was typical. On January 7 Mr. Robert Patterson, U.S. Under Secretary of War, said at a Press conference at Los Angeles that until then only 377 Japanese had been made prisoners by American troops. The Japanese figures broadcast from Imperial Headquarters on February 25 said that 4,500 troops and 2,000 civilians serving with the garrison had perished on Kwajalein, Roi and Namur.

The Americans did not rest upon their laurels. While they were capturing the islands of the Kwajalein atoll their aircraft were striking at other hostile strongholds in the Marshall Archipelago and reported that the Japanese seemed to be running short of aircraft and ammunition, so weak was their fighter opposition and so meagre their A.A. fire. Wake Island was again bombed and on February 14 Liberators attacked Ponape Island, 400 sea-miles east of Truk and 600 west-south-west of Kwajalein. On the night of February 17 the Navy Department stated that American naval task forces with several hundred aircraft had attacked Truk. Tokyo reported "fierce battles," but the necessity for wireless silence prevented the American public from receiving further news of the operation until the night of February 20 when Admiral Nimitz's report was issued by the Navy Department. It began characteristically :

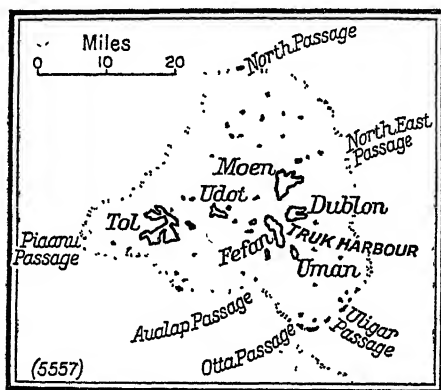
"The Pacific Fleet has returned in Truk the visit made by the Japanese Fleet (to Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941) and has effected a partial settlement of the debt.

The initial approach was undetected. During attacks on February 16 and 17 our carrier aeroplanes destroyed at least 201 enemy aircraft, of which 127 were shot down in combat. More than 50 additional aircraft were damaged on the ground. There was no enemy air opposition on the second day of the attack. Enemy ships sunk included two light cruisers, three destroyers, one ammunition ship, a seaplane tender, two oilers, two gunboats, and eight cargo ships.

Enemy ships probably sunk included a cruiser or large destroyer, two oilers and four cargo ships. Shore facilities on the principal islands, including aerodrome runways and installations, were thoroughly bombed and strafed. Our losses were 17 aeroplanes. None of our ships was lost, but one sustained moderate damage." It was stated that Admiral Spruance had been in over-all command of the operation and that Rear-Admiral M. A. Mitscher directed the carrier attack.

On February 21 the Japanese Imperial Staff broadcast an unusually truthful account of the attack, enumerating their losses as two cruisers, three destroyers and 13 transports with 120 aircraft. They had, of course, to

claim that the attack had been repulsed with the loss of two cruisers, "one of which might have been a battleship," and 34 aircraft, but they admitted "some damage to installations." In fact, the Americans had underestimated the damage they had done. On February 27 Admiral Nimitz reported that a study of reconnaissance photographs at Truk had disclosed 23 ships sunk, six probably sunk and 11 damaged. It was also made



TRUK ATOLL

known that one of the Japanese cruisers destroyed at Truk had been sunk by long-range fire from American battleships as she tried to escape through the North Passage of the protective reef round Truk.

The attack on Truk did not occupy all the American forces in these seas. On February 18 the Navy Department reported :

"The capture of Eniwetok atoll (380 miles north-west of Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands) has been undertaken by forces of the Pacific Ocean areas. Army assault troops have landed and established beach-heads. The initial landings took place after strong preliminary attack by carrier-based aircraft and heavy ships of the Pacific Fleet. Troops went ashore under cover of battleship gunfire and with the close support of low-flying naval aircraft." The report added that the forces engaged in this operation were under the command of Rear-Admiral R. K. Turner, and the amphibious forces under that of Rear-Admiral H. W. Hill. The assault troops comprised the 22nd Marines and elements of the 106th Army infantry under the command of Brigadier-General T. E. Watson of the Marine Corps,

The island of Engebi in the Eniwetok atoll fell after a little more than six hours' fighting and gave the Americans its airstrip, a mile in length. The garrison, too shaken by a heavy bombardment to oppose the landing, was quickly destroyed by the Marines. On February 22, a week after the first landing on Engebi, the conquest of the Eniwetok atoll was completed by the capture of Parry Island, which guards the eastern entrance to the lagoon. It contained a wireless station and had been fortified. Ten and a half hours' hard fighting were required for its reduction. The Marines who captured it presented it to Admiral Hill as "a Washington birthday present." Some 3,000 Japanese were killed in these islands, bringing their total loss in the Marshalls to nearly 12,000 men.

This success following the capture of the Kwajalein atoll effectively isolated the remaining Japanese garrisons in the Marshall Islands and exposed their communications to constant observation and attack from the bases which had passed into American hands. Unless the Japanese battle-fleet could cover transports dispatched to revictual or remove them, their prospects were bleak. They had lost their aircraft, the islands did not produce enough food for their own inhabitants, let alone the Japanese troops and workmen, and though the troops were doubtless resolved to starve last, starve they would unless relieved, and the Japanese Navy was obviously determined to take no such risk.

The next islands to feel American blows were the Ladrões or Mariannes, about 600 miles north-west of Truk. The first news of the attack came on the night of February 23 in a message from Admiral Nimitz, who announced the capture of Parry Island, and added :

"A strong Pacific fleet task-force, including several hundred carrier-based aircraft, struck Saipan and Tinian Islands in the Marianne group on Tuesday (February 22). Further details are not available." On February 24 the Navy Department issued another announcement. It stated that the American warships were detected as they approached Tinian and Saipan, and attacks on the ships were carried out continuously during the night and morning of February 22 by enemy land-based torpedo-planes and bombers. "Fourteen of the attacking aircraft were shot down by our anti-aircraft fire, and five more were shot down by our air patrol. In spite of persistent and continuing attacks our carriers launched their aircraft according to schedule. Two attacks were carried out in force against the principal targets, and a smaller raid was made on Guam.

A total of 29 enemy aircraft were shot down over the target and an additional 87 were wrecked on the ground. A total of 135 enemy aircraft were destroyed.

Few enemy ships were found. One cargo ship was sunk, another was severely damaged and apparently beached, while yet another was set on fire. One patrol craft was blown up and seven other small ships were

damaged. Small boats in the harbour areas were strafed. Runways, seaplane aprons, and other aerodrome facilities, fuel dumps and buildings were heavily bombed and strafed. Our losses were six aircraft. None of our ships was sunk or damaged."

The report also mentioned an attack on Kusaie in the Marshall Islands. On February 27 a further report from Admiral Nimitz recorded attacks on Japanese bases in the Central Pacific area by aircraft from the Seventh Army Air Force and the Fleet Air Wing 2. Nauru, Kusaie and three other enemy-held atolls in the Marshalls were raided and 30 tons of bombs were dropped on Ponape, "scoring hits on docks, aerodrome installations, a petrol dump, and a cargo vessel."

A delayed dispatch from a correspondent on board one of the battleships which attacked the Marianne Islands related that twice the pilots of Japanese torpedo-bombers nearly succeeded in crashing their machines on the decks of an American aircraft-carrier. One was set ablaze by the concentrated fire of the carrier, a battleship, a cruiser and a destroyer when only 100 yards from its intended victim. In spite of their fanatical courage the Japanese failed to make a single hit in the course of attacks which lasted 11 hours from first to last.

On February 28 American aircraft raided Wake Island, flying unusually low, and claimed to have destroyed or severely damaged six aeroplanes on the ground. Nauru was bombed on the same day. On March 3 an official spokesman stated at Washington that an important factor in the victory in the Marshall Islands was the 75-mm. cannon carried by the Mitchell bombers. The Commander of the 7th A.A.F. who was visiting Washington at the time spoke most highly of the cannon which he described as

"a formidable weapon with a surprising degree of accuracy." It brought good results against shipping and was particularly successful when used as flying artillery to neutralize anti-aircraft and automatic weapon fire. With these guns the Mitchells drove the Japanese gunners from their weapons and often destroyed the guns themselves.

On March 4 there were more air raids on three enemy positions in the Marshalls. On March 9 Ponape was bombed for the sixth time in nine days and Kusaie for the fifth time in a week. These two mountainous and forest-clad islands were described as "outposts of Truk," from which Ponape was 414 miles and Kusaie 770 miles distant. The unopposed occupation of Wotho Island in the Marshalls was recorded on March 12. Truk was

raided by escorted Liberators at dawn on March 15 and on the same day Navy reconnaissance aircraft bombed atolls in the Caroline Islands, and Army, Navy and Marine aircraft raided bases in the Marshall Islands with success. Kusaie and Oroluk in the Carolines, which lie east and west of Ponape respectively, were bombed again on March 16, and on March 18 the Americans attacked Ponape and sank a small ship, while their battleships shelled, and their carrier-borne aircraft bombed Mili atoll in the eastern Marshalls.

In the last days of March the United States Pacific Fleet reached farther westwards. On March 29 a powerful force including aircraft-carriers and battleships attacked the Palau Islands. Admiral Nimitz announced on March 31 that the attacks were continuing, and added :

"After the discovery of the approach of our forces by enemy planes searching from their bases in the Carolines and New Guinea, their ships were observed fleeing the area before our units could reach attack positions." A naval spokesman said that the force was similar in composition to that which carried out the great raid on Truk on February 16 and 17 and added that there were no transports among its vessels.

For good reasons the American force observed wireless silence for some days after the close of this operation, which had brought the battleships and aircraft-carriers of the great Republic to within 500 miles of the Philippines. It was known, however, that the operation had been successful and that during its development land-based Liberators from the islands of the central and south-west Pacific areas had bombed Truk by day and night. They paid special attention to the airstrip on Moen Island within the atoll, while Army Mitchell bombers and Marine Corps dive-bombers raided Japanese strongholds in the Marshalls. Another interesting development was the opening of attacks from the Solomons on Woleai Island in the Western Carolines, a staging point for aircraft passing between Palau and Truk. Moreover, it was clear that General MacArthur's highly successful offensive on the Hollandia air base in northern New Guinea (*q.v.* Section 4A of this chapter) was designed among other things to prevent the strong force which the Japanese had built up there from intervening against the

American fleet operating against or returning from the Palau Islands.

On April 4 Colonel Knox gave the Press the substance of the first official report of the action of the American task force against the Palau Islands and Woleai in the western Carolines. He mentioned as "a curious aspect" of the operations that there had been a brief air-raid alarm at Manila, although it was not known whether this was attributable to the approach of an American aeroplane. Fuller details were given in a report from Admiral Chester Nimitz issued at Pearl Harbour on the night of April 7.

The Palau Islands, the report said, were attacked on March 29 and 30, the Ulithi Islands on March 30, and Woleai on March 31 by aircraft from carrier task forces commanded by Vice-Admiral M. A. Mitscher. The damage to enemy surface ships at the Palau Islands¹ included the following ships :

Sunk—two destroyers, one unidentified combat ship, two large, six medium and eight small cargo ships, one small, one medium and three large oilers, and a patrol ship.

Damaged—one destroyer, beached and burning ; one large repair ship, a medium oiler and two small oilers, one small cargo ship ; burning—two small cargo ships ; beached and damaged—one large, two medium and five small cargo ships ; beached—one small cargo ship.

The report went on to describe the destruction of ground installations, warehouses, dumps, hangars, etc., and added that at Palau 93 aircraft were destroyed in combat and 39 on the ground or water. Many others were probably destroyed. At Woleai seven aeroplanes were destroyed and during the nights preceding and following the attacks on Palau, carrier aircraft shot down 17 attacking aeroplanes, while four were shot down by ships' A.A. batteries.

During the night of March 28 a United States submarine torpedoed an enemy battleship of unidentified class departing from Palau under escort. Although she suffered considerable damage she was able to escape at moderate speed under protection of her destroyer escort.

Allied losses in these operations were 25 aircraft and 18 airmen. There was no damage to surface ships.

The price paid for the sinking of 25 Japanese ships, three of them war vessels, and the destruction of 160 aircraft, besides the infliction of often grave damage on 17 other Japanese ships and at least 54 more aircraft had been surprisingly low. The battleship which was torpedoed but escaped was the first of her class to be sighted by an American warship since the actions off Guadalcanal in November, 1942.

During the quarter the Americans operating from the Aleutian Islands made several attacks on the Kuriles. On February 7 the U.S. Navy Department announced :

"In the north Pacific at 10 p.m. on February 4 United States naval surface units bombarded enemy installations on the south and east coasts of

¹Babelthuap is the largest of the Palaus. Angaur, a small island at its southern extremity, has an important wireless station.

Paramushir in the Kurile Islands. A number of fires were started and one unidentified ship was hit and beached. Enemy coastal guns returned the fire, but the American units suffered no damage. During the same night a flight of our aircraft bombed Paramushir and Shimishu. All the aircraft returned."

The U.S. force of cruisers and destroyers which carried out this operation was commanded by Rear-Admiral Wilder Baker. This was the first naval attack on the Kuriles. Paramushir (Paramushiro is a variant) had been bombed on January 20 and 21 and it experienced another attack on February 5. On March 16, in the course of a raid on the Kuriles by U.S. Army and Navy bombers, a Liberator from the Aleutians penetrated deeper into Japanese territory than any land-based hostile aeroplane had yet gone, and bombed Matsuwa Island only 960 miles from Tokyo without opposition.

"On the same day Ventura search aeroplanes of the Fleet Air Wing attacked positions farther north in the Kurile chain, which had been bombed several times before, the naval and air base at Shimishu between Paramushir and the Russian territory of Kamchatka, and on the following day they repeated their attacks. Liberators likewise bombed Shimishu on Friday (March 17). No fighters went up to oppose them in any of these attacks, and they encountered only light anti-aircraft fire." Paramushir was bombed again on March 18, and on March 25 the Navy Department announced three of the Kuriles were bombed before dawn. Army Liberators attacked Paramushir and, for the first time, Onnekaton. This is a volcanic island 29 miles south of Paramushir. A single Navy Ventura raided Shimishu. One aeroplane was lost in these operations.

Although more were lost than in any preceding quarter American submarines continued to harass Japanese shipping in the Pacific and in East Asian waters. The Navy Department announced these successes :

January 21. *Sunk*—a large tanker, a medium cargo transport, a small transport, seven medium freighters, and two small freighters.

January 31. *Sunk*—two large transports, one medium transport, a medium tanker, a medium naval auxiliary, a small freighter, a medium cargo transport, and seven medium freighters.

February 11. *Sunk*—three transports, two large tankers, six cargo vessels, and a large auxiliary ship.

February 19. "Two United States submarines recently returned from deep in the Japanese Empire's waters to report the sinking of 13 enemy merchant ships totalling 68,200 tons."¹

¹ This was the first time a Navy Department statement had referred with particularity to the area in which any American submarines in the Pacific had been operating. The high average tonnage of the ships sunk was significant.

February 29. *Sunk*—a large tanker, a medium transport, a small cargo vessel, and 11 medium-sized cargo carriers.

March 9. *Sunk*—one small cargo vessel, nine medium cargo vessels, two medium transports, a large tanker, and one larger cargo transport.

March 21. *Sunk*—two transports, two tankers and 11 cargo steamers.

March 24. *Sunk*—a converted minelayer, two small and three medium-sized freighters, three medium-sized transports, one large, and one medium-sized tanker.

April 4.¹ *Sunk*—two medium tankers, 11 medium cargo vessels, and one small cargo vessel.

The following losses of U.S. submarines were reported by the Navy Department. Most, perhaps all, had been lost in the Pacific. The *Pompano* (1,330 tons) reported on January 5; *Cisco* and *S44* of 1,525 and 850 tons respectively, reported on February 8; *Corvina* (1,525 tons), March 14; *Capelin* and *Sculpin*, both announced March 19; *Scorpion*, reported March 22.

¹ These sinkings are included, since it is more than probable that they were effected before the close of the quarter.

CHAPTER VI

THE AMERICAS

I : THE UNITED STATES

A. PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

On March 4, 1944, Mr. Roosevelt began his twelfth year as President of the United States. In the eleven years which had passed since that memorable inauguration day in March, 1933, with its background of suspense and economic dislocation, Mr. Roosevelt had moved through the first exciting months of the New Deal into the calmer days of the middle thirties ; through his re-elections in 1936 and 1940 into the leadership of the nation into war in December, 1941. This year, 1944, was again election year, and it seemed certain that if the Democrats were to win Mr. Roosevelt would have to be their choice for candidate. The man who broke into the national scene so vigorously with his Brains Trust, his N.R.A., and his bold measures for relief and reconstruction in 1933—a man who was not yet far enough to the Left for many, but who was certainly radical in his handling of political and economic issues—was still the outstanding Democrat as well as the national leader. He had given no indication of his views on the question of a fourth term as President, but Mr. Henry Wallace, the Vice-President, predicted at Chicago on February 12 that Mr. Roosevelt would be re-elected for a fourth term and that his renomination at the Democratic Convention would be more nearly unanimous than it was in 1940.

The New Deal had changed during Mr. Roosevelt's eleven years at the White House. The President said of it at the end of 1943 that the term "New Deal" no longer seemed relevant. When, however, some Republicans claimed that in making that comment Mr. Roosevelt was asking the United States conveniently to forget the years of economic reform under the New Deal and to remem-

ber, in its voting, only the Commander-in-Chief (Mr. Roosevelt) under whose guidance military victory would be achieved, he replied forcefully. He listed 30 New Deal measures and asked his critics which among them they would abolish. He then urged that the social reforms which those measures embodied should be fully and freely discussed during the campaign in 1944. Finally, he declared that the programme of the past would have to be carried forward into the future. That was Mr. Roosevelt's challenge to critics of the New Deal—under its original name or under any other name.

In his annual Message to Congress on January 11 Mr. Roosevelt dealt with the needs of the war and of the future. He made a strong appeal for a total national effort and stressed the necessity for unity in international dealings. "This nation in the past two years," he said, "has become an active partner in the world's greatest war against human slavery. We have joined with right-minded people in order to defend ourselves in a world that has been gravely threatened with gangster rule. But I do not think that any of us Americans can be content with mere survival. The sacrifices that we and our allies are making impose upon us all a sacred obligation to see to it that out of this war we and our children will gain something better than mere survival. We are united in determination that this war shall not be followed by another interim which leads to new disaster—that we shall not repeat the tragic errors of ostrich isolationism, that we shall not repeat the excesses of the wild twenties when this nation went for a joy-ride on a roller coaster which ended in a tragic crash."

Dealing with foreign affairs, and in particular with the conferences at Moscow, Cairo and Teheran, Mr. Roosevelt said: "Of course we made some commitments. We most certainly committed ourselves to very large and very specific military plans which require the use of all Allied forces to bring about the defeat of our enemies at the earliest possible time. But there were no secret treaties or political or financial commitments. The one supreme objective for the future, which we discussed for each nation individually, and for all the United Nations, can be summed up in one word: security. And that means not only physical security which provides safety from attacks by aggressors. It means also economic security, social security, moral security—in a family of nations." Of the domestic scene in the United States Mr. Roosevelt said: "While the majority goes on about its great work without complaint, a noisy minority maintains an uproar of demands for special favours for special groups. They are pests who swarm through the lobbies of the Congress and the cocktail bars of Washington, representing these special groups as opposed to the basic interests of the nation as a whole. They have come to look upon the war primarily as a chance to make profits for themselves at the expense of their neighbours—profits in money or in terms of political or social preferment. But such selfish agitation can be highly dangerous in war-time. It creates confusion. It damages morale. It hampers our national effort. It muddies the waters and therefore prolongs the war. If ever there was a time to subordinate individual or group selfishness to the national good, that time is now."

Among Mr. Roosevelt's recommendations to Congress were a realistic tax law "which will tax all unreasonable profits, both individual and corporate, and reduce the ultimate cost of the war to our sons and daughters"; a continuation of the law for the re-negotiation of war contracts; a cost-of-food law; the early re-enactment of the Stabilization Statute of October, 1942; and a national service law, which, for the duration of the war, would prevent strikes, and, with certain appropriate exceptions, would make available for war production every able-bodied adult in the nation. "These five measures together form a just and equitable whole," Mr. Roosevelt said. "I would not recommend a national service law unless the other laws were passed to keep down the cost of living, to share equitably the burdens of taxation, to hold the stabilization line, and to prevent undue profits. . . . I have for three years hesitated to recommend a national service act. To-day, however, I am convinced of its necessity. Although I believe that we and our allies can win the war without such a measure, I am certain that nothing less than total mobilization of all our resources of man-power and capital will guarantee an earlier victory, and reduce the toll of suffering and sorrow and blood."

On the controversial subject of votes for members of the services Mr. Roosevelt said: "Several alleged reasons have prevented the enactment of legislation which would preserve for our soldiers and sailors and marines the fundamental prerogative of citizenship—the right to vote. No amount of legislative argument can becloud this issue in the eyes of these 10,000,000 American citizens. Surely the signers of the Constitution did not intend a document which, even in war-time, would be construed to take away the franchise of any of those who are fighting to preserve the Constitution itself. Our soldiers and sailors and marines know that the overwhelming majority of them will be deprived of the opportunity to vote, if the voting machinery is left exclusively to the States under existing State laws, and that there is no likelihood of these laws being changed in time to enable them to vote at the next election. The Army and Navy have reported that it will be impossible effectively to administer 48 different soldier-voting laws. It is the duty of the Congress to remove this unjustifiable discrimination against the men and women in our armed forces and to do it as quickly as possible."

The specific issue behind Mr. Roosevelt's recommendation of a realistic tax law was that while the President had asked for a Bill of \$10,500,000,000, Congress passed, after six months' deliberation, a Bill for only \$2,194,000,000. This was the Bill which Mr. Roosevelt vetoed in terms which the Senators found "insulting." The veto called the Bill "not a Tax Bill, but a Tax Relief Bill providing relief not for the needy but for the greedy." This veto message was reviewed in the Senate by Senator Alben Barkley, the Majority leader since 1937—one of Mr. Roosevelt's most loyal supporters. When he came to the passage just quoted Senator Barkley said: "This is a calculated and deliberate assault upon the legislative integrity of every Member of Congress."

Both the Senate and the House of Representatives immediately voted to override the President's veto. At the same time Senator Barkley resigned the leadership of the Senate in protest against the President's action. Fifteen minutes after his resignation he was re-elected unanimously by his fellow Democrats. The resignation and re-election revealed that there was tension within the Democratic Party and between the President and Congress. The Barkley episode was taken to mean that Congress was asserting its independence, and that the Democratic Party, while recognizing that Mr. Roosevelt was their only possible leader for the 1944 election, was not prepared to accept that leadership on unreasonable terms. An extreme—but possibly significant—comment was made by Senator Vandenberg. He said: "The President is running for a fourth term on an anti-Congress platform."

In spite of Mr. Roosevelt's appeal for action on the service vote the House of Representatives on February 3 defeated by 224 votes to 167 the Administration's Federal War Ballot Bill, which had been drafted to enable soldiers to vote at the 1944 elections.

The House then adopted the Eastland-Rankin Bill, designed to encourage individual States to make regular absentee ballots available to members of the armed forces. This was the Bill, already passed by the Senate at the end of 1943, which was described by the President as a fraud on service men. The Senate later passed a compromise Bill aimed at establishing a double system of voting. Yet little progress was made towards that solution which was needed to enable more than 10,000,000 men and women in the armed forces to vote. The dispute was between the States and the Federal authority, and its significance lay in the fact that while millions of men were overseas and millions of others had been displaced from their normal place of residence by the calls of war production the States were fighting to hold their traditional rights on registration for voting. These included residential qualifications which varied in the several States between three months and two years. The Federal

case, as Mr. Roosevelt said, was that the Army and the Navy could not administer 48 different soldier-voting laws.

Foreign policy was dealt with at length by Mr. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, on March 21 in a statement which took the form of summaries of declarations made by him during the past two years.

"The paramount aim of our foreign policy," Mr. Hull said, "is to defeat our enemies as quickly as possible. Beyond final victory our fundamental national interests are the assuring of our national security and the fostering of the economic and social well-being of our people." The statement was issued at a time when the State Department's policy was meeting much criticism, and it did little to satisfy the critics. The *New York Herald Tribune* said: "In a dozen directions what is needed now is a policy which can take decisions. All we are provided with is Mr. Hull's admirable but decidedly abstract generalities." The *Washington Post* was stronger. It could see only "procrastination, pusillanimity, and pussy-footing" in the State Department's policy, and it added that while the United States should be straining every nerve and sinew to draw Finland out of the war, "we have not even told the Finns that we think the Russian terms reasonable."

On March 26 it was announced by Senator Tom Connally, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, that work within the State Department on the American plan for the international organization mentioned in the Moscow declaration was so far advanced that Mr. Hull had asked for the appointment of a Congressional Committee to which it might be submitted after the Easter recess.

B. MR. WILLKIE

Although Mr. Wendell Willkie's campaign for the Republican Presidential nomination was to end so soon, so suddenly, and for many people so surprisingly—he withdrew after his failure in the Wisconsin primary elections in mid-April—his political activity during the first three months of this election year was extensive, and it is well worthy of record. In its approach to foreign affairs especially it represented the attitude of many liberal Republicans. It was an approach that made Mr. Willkie notable as a national figure and, at the same time, limited his hold on a great section of the Republican Party. Yet the period under review appeared to be one of great promise for Mr. Willkie. Those who supported him knew that his beliefs would offend many orthodox Republicans, but they felt that those losses might very

well be offset by the support that Mr. Willkie would attract from other sections of the electorate.

In a comment on one of Mr. Willkie's speeches on the Republicans' claim to office, Mr. Walter Lippmann, in the *New York Herald Tribune*, said on February 10: "Mr. Willkie's speech is a powerful answer given in measured words and fine temper to the question of whether the country can afford a change of Administration. But the answer could not be conclusive for the simple reason that Mr. Willkie is unable to say whether the control of his party will be in the hands of the post-New Deal Republicans, who mean to shape the future, or of the pre-New Deal Old Guard Republicans who are out front in this Congress. Yet this is the crucial question as to whether the Republican Party can be trusted with power Mr. Willkie cannot answer the question to-day because the answer depends on the outcome of the campaign he is now making among the rank and file of his party."

Mr. Willkie received other favourable comment—some of it from newspapers which had often opposed him—on a speech he made on February 3 in which he declared that the United States had been following a "fiscal primrose path" and advocated far heavier taxes than any that had yet been proposed. In four years, 1941-44, Mr. Willkie said, the United States had pledged itself for an amount of more than \$300,000,000,000 and it faced a public debt at the end of the war of at least \$250,000,000,000. "The interest on such a debt will be a staggering charge," he continued. "It is that contemplated debt and that charge which must determine America's fiscal policy from now on, whether in peace or in war. For as we look forward we face ironically this tremendous risk: that we shall lose in debt the victory we have gained in blood. If that is to be prevented we have a single duty: to tax ourselves beyond any limit we have hitherto imagined possible. We must tax to the limit every dollar, corporate and individual, that is capable of bearing a tax, particularly those corporate and individual earnings which are created by war." He sincerely believed, he added, that the people would accept additional burdens if the issues were made clear; but they would demand an economy in government of a severity equal to their sacrifice.

Of the issues before the American people Mr. Willkie said on February 14 in a speech at Portland, Oregon, that the Republican Party, if it were to win the election, must through its nominees and its platform stand on the following: that the war must be fought to a conclusion and fought as effectively or more effectively; that the party must have a better comprehension of the economic and social adjustments with which the United States would be confronted when the war was over, and must adopt policies that would make the economy effective, but at the same time recognize the advancing social requirements of the times; that, in the person of its candidate, its interest in and understanding of the United States, co-operation with the other nations of the world was not a mere cloak put on for political campaign purposes, but a deep and abiding belief. It was at this meeting that Mr. Willkie formally announced his candidature for the Republican nomination. Declaring that Mr. Willkie had rendered great services to the country in supporting the view that the United States could never again return safely to the paths of political and economic isolation, the *New York Times* asked: "Where is there another available Republican candidate who can match his record?"

Mr. Willkie's views on the role of the United States in world affairs were further developed in an article he wrote for the spring issue of *Foreign*

Affairs under the title of "Our Sovereignty : Shall we use it ?" He expressed the belief that another cycle of fear and depression and another world war could be avoided only if the United States used its sovereign power to help to create and operate a strong international organization pledged to use force. Since the turn of the century, he said, the United States had lost the power of directing its own national destiny. The country must be prepared to revise its ideas of sovereignty, even to granting that as a matter of principle the United States could not refuse to arbitrate in international disputes which arise from domestic policies. He recognized that there were difficulties in attempting to create a closely integrated international police force, but he found it easy to believe that there could be "an agreement among peace-loving nations to the effect that each will maintain certain land, sea or air forces, and that each will use them collaboratively, in agreed situations and within agreed limits, to prevent aggression."

2 : LATIN AMERICA

Events in two South American countries during the first three months of 1944 indicated that Axis influence was still potent in Bolivia, and still more in Argentina, and justified fears of similar manifestations in other Latin American states. The Bolivian revolution against General Peñaranda's *régime* had aroused misgiving in the U.S. and in the more democratic republics of the southern continent,¹ and at the end of 1943 only one American state, Ecuador, had recognized the new Government. On January 3 the anxieties of Washington were increased by the news that Argentina had followed the example of Ecuador. This gave particular point to the following statement made by Mr. Cordell Hull at Washington on January 7 :

"It is our information that by the consultation now in progress there is already taking place a considerable exchange of information regarding the origin of the revolution in Bolivia. This assembling of facts should soon permit each Government to reach its own conclusions.

Information now available here increasingly strengthens the belief that forces outside of Bolivia, and unfriendly to the defence of American republics, inspired and aided the Bolivian revolution."

As a result of these inquiries and exchanges of information the State Department announced on January 24 that the United States would not recognize the revolutionary Government of Bolivia and that the American Minister in La Paz, Mr. Pierre Boal, had been recalled. The statement ran thus :

¹Cf. *The Seventeenth Quarter*, pp. 203-4.

"This Government has been aware that subversive groups hostile to the Allied cause have been plotting disturbances against American Governments operating in defence of the hemisphere against Axis aggression. On December 20, 1943, the Bolivian Government was overthrown by force in circumstances linking this action with the subversive groups above mentioned. The most important and urgent question arising from this development in Bolivia is the fact that this is but an act having for its purpose steadily expanding activities on the continent. These developments, viewed in the light of information the American Republics have been exchanging among themselves, dispose negatively of the matter of this Government's recognition of the present revolutionary *junta* at La Paz.¹

The inter-American system built up over the past ten years has had for one of its purposes the defending of the sovereign republics . . . against aggression or intervention in their domestic affairs by influences operating outside the hemisphere and outside their individual frontiers. This Government is confident that freedom-loving people of the American Republics, including those of Bolivia, who have the good will of the Government and people of the United States, will understand that this decision is taken in furtherance of the aforesaid purpose."

It was announced on the same day that the Governments of Venezuela, Costa Rica and Brazil had withheld recognition from the Bolivian Government. The Brazilian Foreign Minister stated that his Government were in possession of information interchanged with other American Governments regarding the origin of the movement of December 20. He continued :

"In view of these reports and considering the present stage of the war, we cannot advise that diplomatic relations should be established with the *junta* formed in Bolivia, as this does not offer guarantees for the defence of the continent."

On the following day Mr. Eden in answer to a question in Parliament said that the British Government, who had been in the closest consultation with the U.S. Government, had been informed that, "subversive groups"

hostile to the United Nations were responsible for the overthrow by force of the Peñaranda Government. They therefore would not recognize the revolutionary Government as the legal Government of Bolivia, and, in consequence, the British Minister designate to La Paz would not take up his post. Mr. Eden, on the same occasion, added Cuba and Uruguay to the list of American Governments who had refused to recognize the new Bolivian *régime*.

Meanwhile, there had been a remarkable change in the attitude of Argentina. On January 25 it had become known that two main developments seemed likely to bring President Ramirez's Government into the Allied camp. In the first place reports from Washington sug-

¹ What a rambling periphrasis for "prevent the recognition of" !

gested that the United States was planning in agreement with Great Britain to bring home to the Argentine Government the strength of the Allied view that the mischief caused by the continued presence of Axis Embassies and agents in Argentina had become intolerable. Secondly, there came

"the news that the British authorities in Trinidad had detained an Argentine consul, Osmar Helmuth, on the ground that he was an enemy agent, a member of a wide ring. The Argentine Government immediately followed up the news by announcing on January 21 that they had begun investigations in Argentina itself and had already made some arrests."¹

On the night of January 25-26 there were many meetings between members of the Government and military leaders and on the morning of January 26 the Government announced that they had resolved to break off diplomatic relations with Germany and Japan. In a public statement General Gilbert, Foreign Minister since October 21,² said that an immediate breach with the Axis was necessary.

The network of espionage, revealed just before the Government had declared Captain Niebuhr, the German naval attaché, to be *persona non grata*, had been maintained in open violation of Argentine neutrality. A group of foreigners engaged in abusing the country's hospitality were given the support of the diplomatic representatives of the Axis. These acts of espionage were condemned by public opinion and the Government must take measures for their own defence, and were of opinion that it was impossible to continue diplomatic relations with Germany and Japan.

Besides defending her own dignity and sovereignty, General Gilbert added, Argentina was undertaking the defence of other American states against which Axis agents based on Argentine territory had committed acts of aggression.

Public opinion at the capital, which had been depressed by the news of the destruction by earthquake on January 15 of two-thirds of the city of San Juan (in the Andean province of that name) with the loss of over 5,000 lives, was decidedly cheered by the Government's decision. The decree announcing it was published later on January 26. It was stated in London that the arrest and confessions of Osmar Helmuth at Trinidad in December had enabled the British Government to give the Government of Argentina full details about these activities in their

¹ The Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times*, *loc. cit.* January 26.

² And Acting Foreign Minister since September 10 when Admiral Segundo Storni resigned.

territory, and early in February Colonel González, Minister and Secretary to the Presidency, told the Press that the Federal Police with military aid had discovered three spy-rings, two German and one Japanese. The rivalry between the two German rings, one of which was a Nazi party organization while the other was directed by the German Foreign Ministry, had assisted the authorities to discover and unravel the threads of the conspiracy.

For the next fortnight the cause of the United Nations seemed in the ascendant in Argentina. Suspected spies were arrested or rearrested. On January 28 the Government issued a decree ordering the immediate cessation of all commercial and financial operations with Germany and Japan and territories occupied by them. On February 4 it was officially announced that the Republic had broken off relations with Vichy France, Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary and with all Axis-occupied countries. On February 8, General Wolf, the German military and air attaché, and Rear-Admiral Yokishita, the Japanese naval attaché, were placed under open arrest in their homes and prohibited from sending messages by letter or telephone. The official announcement recording this said that police investigations had shown that these two men were the real heads of all Axis espionage in the country. Even a decree prohibiting foreigners from owning, operating or holding shares in wireless broadcasting stations in Argentina which was promulgated on February 2 did not at first cause uneasiness, although the three largest broadcasting stations in the country, which were emphatically pro-Ally, were foreign-owned and were therefore subject to transfer to other hands after an interval of sixty days. Cordial messages were exchanged between President Roosevelt and President Ramirez, in which the Argentine Chief of State said that the breach with the Axis had been made for the protection not only of the national sovereignty, but also of continental defence.

There was one fly in the ointment. On hearing of the decision to break with the Axis, General Rawson, the Ambassador to Brazil, who had been manœuvred out

of politics into diplomacy after heading the *coup d'état* of June 4, 1943,¹ telegraphed thus to President Ramirez :

"As leader of the revolution I congratulate you on your patriotic decision to break relations with Germany and Japan, thus fulfilling the fundamental purpose of the revolution." A reply ascribed to the President, but signed by Colonel Gonzalez, was a rude rebuff. "The revolution," it said, "had no other leaders than those of the Army and Navy, nor any other purpose than national recovery and the strengthening of national sovereignty. The revolution had not and could not have as its programme a breach with any belligerent, since its traditional policy was to maintain peace with all countries. The decision to break with the Axis was taken in order to strengthen Argentine sovereignty and was due to lamentable and unforeseen events."

On receiving this snub General Rawson resigned, and 16 senior officers, leaders of the *Grupo de Oficiales Unidos* (Group of United Officers), generally known as the G.O.U., a mysterious body which was supposed to be the power that ruled the Republic, sent a note to President Ramirez assuring him of their support. The note also described him as "the nerve and brain of the revolution." Colonel Peron, Minister of Labour and Public Welfare, the reputed chief of the G.O.U. and Colonel Gonzalez were among the signatories of this missive.

On February 8 came another warning to the Allies against over-optimism on the subject of Argentina, the reappearance of the "permanently" suppressed pro-German newspaper *El Pampero* under the new name of *El Federal*, which opened with a leading article expressing the detestation of "every true Argentine" for political, economic and social internationalism, for liberalism and the ballot-box. A few days later the blow fell. Before Dr. Adrian Escobar, the new Ambassador to the United States, had presented his letters of credence to President Roosevelt, another revolution had begun in Buenos Aires. At dawn that day a number of young officers had gone to the Foreign Ministry whence they ejected General Gilbert, the Foreign Minister (who seems to have offered his resignation to the President on February 12) and the Under-Secretary, Dr. Ibarra Garya. Later two other Ministers, Colonel Gonzalez and Dr. Gustavo Zuviria (Justice and Education) resigned, and General Gilbert

¹ *q.v.* *The Fifteenth Quarter*, p. 159.

was credibly reported to be under arrest. The President accepted the three resignations. He appointed Lieut.-Colonel Domingo Cortese in Colonel Gonzalez's place, and Dr. Honorio Silgueira was his choice as Minister of Justice and Education. Vice-Admiral Benito Sueyro, Minister of Marine, was appointed Foreign Minister *ad interim*.

The causes of this new *coup* were thus set forth by the Correspondent of *The Times* in Buenos Aires (*loc. cit.* February 17).

On February 11 the Argentine Government were understood to have received from Germany and Japan through Switzerland a very strong protest against the arrest of the two attachés. "It demanded their immediate release and apologies, failing which reprisals would be taken against Argentine diplomats in Germany, Japan and Axis-occupied countries. The Japanese Note was especially violent and was virtually an ultimatum."

"General Gilbert, supported by Colonel Gonzalez, proposed to declare war and to present other Ministers with a *fait accompli*." Dr. Zuviria, on hearing of the plan, tried unsuccessfully to raise the rest of the Cabinet against the two Ministers. But he succeeded in stirring up the Nationalists and Army officers. They believed that it was also the intention of the Government to break off relations with Spain, on the ground that Spanish subjects had been indulging in espionage for the Axis. Colonel Gonzalez had made a veiled reference to Spanish spies in Axis service at a Press conference on February 11 and on February 14 it was said that four decrees were ready for signature "announcing the breach with Spain, declaring war on Germany and Japan and ordering martial law and mobilization. The proposed breach with Spain caused more resentment here than the possibility of war with the Axis."

No official explanation of the resignations of Ministers was made public. The restrictions on the freedom of the German and Japanese attachés were removed; and although the police were able to publish the report on German espionage which Colonel Gonzalez had promised the public, a number of recently arrested suspects were released. It was believed that President Ramirez had been isolated by the 'G.O.U., and on February 25 the Allies had abundant proof of this. At 3.30 a.m. he sent a brief message to the Argentine people from the War Ministry of all places. It said only that he was "fatigued by the intense tasks of Government," and that he had delegated the Presidency to the Vice-President and War Minister, General Edelmiro Farrell, as from the previous day. A strict censorship was imposed. Admiral Sueyro

resigned the Ministry of Marine and his *ad interim* post as Foreign Minister. General Diego Mason, Minister of Agriculture, took over Foreign Affairs and General Juan Pistarini became acting Minister of Marine.

The first act furnished the audience with a good opportunity of anticipating the further development of the political comedy. Colonel Peron, when questioned, observed that the President was, indeed, very tired. Of this the Correspondent of *The Times* at Buenos Aires observed :

"Many Argentines ask why a tired President should have announced his weariness at 3.30 a.m. through the intermediary of the War Minister, while troops surrounded the Presidential residence. It is considered to be more than a coincidence that both President Castillo and President Ramirez were succeeded in their Presidency by their own War Minister. Colonel Peron has now been appointed acting War Minister. Hitherto General Farrell was simultaneously Vice-President and War Minister. General Farrell is believed to be the nominal leader of the new Government, while the real power is wielded by Colonel Peron, who boasted a few months ago that as leader of the G.O.U. he had the resignations of eleven-twelfths of all Argentine military officers to use if needed. One of the first Government measures after the fall of General Ramirez was to release 25 prominent Nationalist leaders and 65 of the rank and file who had been recently arrested. . . . The position is complicated by the fact that the opposition to co-operation with the United Nations comes not from one leader or group of leaders, but from the Army itself acting as a mysterious force with an invisible veto and power to depose Governments." (*The Times*, February 28.)

On the night of February 29-March 1, Lieut.-Colonel Tomas Duco, commanding the 3rd Infantry Regiment, occupied part of the Lomas de Zamora suburb of the capital, seemingly counting on help from confederates in the Army and from the Navy and Air Force in overthrowing the Government. No help reached him and he soon surrendered, although it had been rumoured that the G.O.U. was breaking up owing to the dissensions of its chiefs, and that his movement had the support of civilian Left-wing elements. There was evidence that the Navy regarded the addiction of the senior officers of the Army to politics with dislike ; but they naturally were averse to action which might lead to civil war. Meanwhile the Farrell Government had won two diplomatic successes. On March 1 the Government of Bolivia notified the Argentine Ambassador that they would

continue to recognize his Government, and their action was the more significant since recent changes in the composition of the Villaroel Ministry had given the impression that the Bolivian revolutionaries were now seeking to improve their standing with the United States. On March 4 the Government of Chile made a communication to the Farrell Government in the form of a Note in which they took note of the delegation of government to General Farrell and welcomed his declaration that Argentina would continue the international policy begun by President Ramirez when he broke off relations with the Axis Powers.

On the same day, however, Washington made an important statement on the subject of Argentina through Mr. Edward Stettinius, Under-Secretary of State, which must have weighed more with the Argentine public than the Chilean gesture.

He announced that the U.S. Government had not yet entered into any official relations with General Farrell's *régime* and that this state of virtual non-recognition would continue unless or until "Argentina takes the steps necessary to bring her fully and completely into the realm of hemispherical solidarity." The policy of the United States had been governed during the war primarily by considerations of support for the prosecution of the war and this applied to American relations with any country. He recorded that General Ramirez, while President, broke with the Axis and gave indications that his Government proposed to go further in co-operation for the defence of the hemisphere. Suddenly he abandoned the active conduct of affairs and the U.S. Government had reason to believe that groups not in sympathy with the declared Argentine policy of taking a hand in the defence of the Western hemisphere were active in this turn of events.

As a result, the State Department had instructed its Ambassador to refrain from entering into relations with the new *régime* and that was the present status of U.S. relations with the new Government. In matters relating to security and defence the United States must look to the substance rather than the form and in a bitter war it would be closing one's eyes to realities were grave issues dealt with on a purely technical basis.

"The support by important elements inimical to the United Nations' war effort of movements designed to limit the action already taken could only be a matter of grave anxiety," he continued, concluding with the hope that Argentina would take the steps necessary to bring her into line with the other nations of the New World.

The instructions issued to the American Ambassador, Mr. Norman Armour, were a reminder that toleration had its limits. Similar instructions were given to the British Ambassador, Sir David Kelly, by his Government,

and on March 9 Mr. King informed the Canadian House of Commons that the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires at Buenos Aires had been instructed to refrain for the present from all official contacts with the Farrell administration. These signs of Allied displeasure did not, however, induce the Argentine Government, who had been recognized by Paraguay on March 8, to modify their policy. General Mason had informed the Press on March 6 that the present Government would follow the international policy of General Ramirez, but on March 9 General Ramirez resigned the Presidency in favour of General Farrell in circumstances that left no doubt of his having been compelled to resign by the G.O.U. and much doubt of the new Government's intention to follow his policy. General Farrell took the Presidential oath on March 11. After his resignation General Ramirez addressed a message to the Argentine people and the armed forces giving the reasons for his resignation and incidentally exploding the fiction that he was ill or tired.

He stated that on the night of February 24 a meeting of officers was held at the War Ministry, and that later a number of officers commanding important garrisons informed him that he had lost the confidence of the officers of the Army and requested him to delegate his powers to General Farrell. The officers said that they had been deceived and disappointed by the breach of relations with Germany and Japan. They believed that Axis espionage was a false pretext and that fear of the United States was the real reason for the breach. They expressed their indignation at this "national surrender."

Later the officers heard and believed a report that General Ramirez had signed three decrees declaring war on Germany and Japan and ordering a general mobilization. He told them that the report was false and swore before God on his honour as a soldier that the three decrees did not exist. They did not accept his declaration, and dignity and honour compelled him to resign. The Press was not allowed to publish the statement.

On March 15 it was announced that Colonel Peron had dissolved the G.O.U. and released its members from their oath on the ground that the continued existence of this body might be an obstacle to the new Government. In his message to the G.O.U. the Minister said that the officers' unity had been proved "a magnificent reality" by the events of February 24 (the day when President Ramirez gave way to General Farrell). A taunt obviously directed against the American Ambassador by General

Perlinger, Minister of Interior, on March 29, did not improve the relations between Washington and Buenos Aires. Addressing reporters at Government House, he said :

"We cannot possibly smile at the ambassador of a country which does not maintain relations with the owner of his house. It is impossible ; I am the first to frown on such a gentleman and every Argentine should do likewise." The Minister went on to recommend isolation as Argentina's wisest policy, and to prophesy that the nations which were to-day at war would soon have to unite against Russia.

There were signs of pro-Nazi activity in other Latin-American countries. On January 15 the Peruvian Government announced the detection of a conspiracy, timed to mature on New Year's Eve, and the arrest of Germans and Japanese among the plotters. A revolt in Paraguay, led, it was said, by members of the outlawed Liberal Party, was suppressed after a brief fight on January 26. The Paraguayan Government were understood to have welcomed the breach between Argentina and the Axis, but they recognized the Farrell Government on March 8. Pro-Nazi German plotters were sentenced in Uruguay in February and arrests of Germans for espionage were reported from Chile. In general, indeed, the non-belligerent Governments of Latin America did all that could be reasonably expected of them, and gave the United Nations valuable economic assistance. The elevation of the British diplomatic missions in Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela and Uruguay to the status of Embassies, which was announced during the second week of February, was regarded as being in great measure an acknowledgement of these services.

Brazil continued to give valuable naval and economic aid to her allies. Speaking in London on January 12, the Brazilian Ambassador gave the following account of his country's contribution to the Battle of the Atlantic :

Aircraft of their Coastal Command had till then destroyed 14 enemy submarines and a contingent of Brazilian airmen had left for the battle front. The Navy was collaborating in the protection of convoys to Europe, Africa and the United States. The Army of 300,000 men had been fully equipped and mechanized.

In signing the Atlantic Charter, Brazil had placed her resources at her allies' disposal. The Government was providing the equivalent of an

expeditionary force to increase the production of wild rubber in the Amazon basin. Other essential war-materials which the country was producing and exporting were manganese, nickel, bauxite, the finest quartz crystals for range-fingers, industrial diamonds for precision lathes, and cotton, sugar, meat, skins, cocoa, tobacco, oil nuts and seeds and coffee. The dockyards at Rio de Janeiro had been thoroughly modernized and nine destroyers, 12 mine-layers, with corvettes and many submarine-chasers, had been built there recently.

On January 8 it was officially announced that a German blockade-runner from Japan had been sunk in the South Atlantic by Brazilian and American air and surface craft, and that the survivors of her crew had been brought prisoners to Brazil.

In Central America the Presidential election in Costa Rica resulted in the victory of Sr. Teodor Picado, whom the parties of the Left supported. Only 15 persons were reported to have been killed or wounded during the polling, which was obligatory.

Mexico strengthened her ties with the United States by a treaty relating to the conservation, distribution and use of the available water supply of the Rio Grande, Colorado and Tijuana Rivers. The treaty, which was an excellent example of the working of the "good neighbour" policy, was signed on February 3.

The Tijuana, the smallest of the three rivers, enters the Pacific south of San Diego. For part of its lower course it forms the boundary between Mexican territory (Baja California) and the American State of California. The conservation of its waters interests fruit growers on each side of the border. The metropolitan districts of southern California and the developed agricultural areas of the north of Baja California depend largely on the control and availability of the waters of the Colorado which flow into the Gulf of California. By the Treaty new works will be constructed to bring its waters under still better control.

The Rio Grande forms the boundary between the U.S.A. and Mexico from El Paso to the Gulf of Mexico. The closely cultivated regions on both banks—covering over 500,000 acres in Texas alone—and the cities on the river are beginning to need more water than the natural flow of the river can supply. The two Governments therefore agreed to construct and operate large conservation, storage and flood protection works on the river from Fort Quitman to its mouth. They would also explore the possibility of power generation at international hydro-electric plants.

CHAPTER VII

VICTIMS, ACCOMPLICES AND NEUTRALS

I : FRANCE AND ITALY

A. FRANCE BOND AND FREE

The pattern of French developments showed little variation in the first quarter of 1944. Only the emphasis was different and more clearly marked than ever. The subjugation of Vichy to the German will was carried a stage further and was exposed in all its pitifulness and humiliation by the resplendent resistance of French patriots both within and without the motherland. The further decline of such authority as Vichy retained may be described first.

Towards the end of 1943 Marshal Pétain figured in a strange episode. The full facts are still not known, and it is mainly on the basis of a letter which Ribbentrop wrote on the instructions of Hitler himself that it is possible to infer what happened. It appears that the aged Marshal contemplated the summoning of the National Assembly—which went when the parliamentary régime was abolished—with a view to making some change in the succession. He had also prepared a broadcast to the nation. His motives are not clear, but it is a reasonable assumption that, recognizing at long last the growing strength of the resistance movement inside France, he wished by a show of independence to stop the rot in his own régime.

There may have been, too, the purely opportunist intention of seeking to impress the Allies, whose military victory was now so abundantly evident, with an open avowal of *attentisme*. However, the Germans acted with characteristic ruthlessness as soon as they heard of the Marshal's plan and broadcast. Both were banned as a matter of course. Ribbentrop sent the Marshal a letter which showed up the hollowness of all Vichy's pretensions. The German Foreign Minister upbraided him in the sharpest terms for his repeated failures loyally to carry out the pledge of collaboration, brusquely told him that there could be no question of convening the

National Assembly, and ordered him to make certain changes in the so-called Vichy Government. If he did not like the demands made on him, he could resign. The Marshal did not resign.

The sequel was soon seen. Fundamental changes were in fact introduced without protest from the Marshal, who had for so long posed as the defender of French interests and dignity. For one thing the powers of Joseph Darnand, the Himmler of France, were widened, and it was early seen that he was going to use them to the full against his own countrymen. Not less important was the appointment of Philippe Henriot as Secretary of State for Information and Propaganda. Henriot was an extremely astute, persuasive, and eloquent broadcaster, and there is no doubt that for a time his voice over the wireless carried much weight with his hearers. He became known, and not without some truth, as the Goebbels of France. In particular, he exploited in a singularly infamous way the distress and destruction caused by the necessary air raids carried out by the Allied forces against German targets in France. There was a shamelessness about his methods, but up to a point they were effective. He proved himself a good servant both of Vichy and of Berlin. Predominant among the German-inspired changes, however, was the appointment of Marcel Déat as—in the grandiloquent official nomenclature—Minister of Labour and National Security. Déat was a renegade Socialist. At one time he was boasting about what the parties of the Left would do with Hitler. Later, he became an advocate of collaboration between France and Germany, and he finished up as a fanatical admirer of Hitler and his system. In his new office he applied himself almost ferociously to the task of providing French conscripts for German war factories. All these appointments showed with what completeness Marshal Pétain had bowed to his masters.

The intention was clear. It was, if possible, to cow and regimentate French men and women. Vichy and Berlin were not long in finding that the resisters were proof against both cajolery and coercion. Darnand rightly regarded as "priority number one" the reduction of the *maquis*. This term came to signify one of the most

dramatic and heroic struggles of the war in Europe. Many thousands of young Frenchmen called up for deportation to Germany went off into the hills and forests, there to organize themselves in armed resistance to the oppressor. Officers of the Army of the Armistice trained them, peasants supplied them with food, women tended to their clothes, and in due course the Allies provided them with the arms with which to carry on the hard and hazardous fight—not as many arms as they could have used, for as one man fell his comrade picked up his rifle and took his place in the line or at the barricade. It was in Haute Savoie that the core of the *maquis* was to be found at first, but as the movement gathered strength there were few departments which had not their bands of *maquisards* ambushing the enemy and defying the edicts of Vichy. Darnand launched a violent offensive against the patriots in Haute Savoie, and tried desperately hard to represent it as a purely French movement against outlaws. The German troops were kept carefully in the background, but it was not long before they had to be called into action, for many of the French forces employed were in sympathy with the *maquisards*, and even when they did not openly refuse to carry out orders they were reluctant and half-hearted. The men of the *maquis* suffered sore privations in the winter of 1943-44; in the many engagements with the enemy they had grievous casualties. Never, however, were they crushed, never did they give up the fight, and, as the war outside developed, their own brave struggle commanded the esteem of free men more and more.

It was against this background that developments in Algiers, where General de Gaulle and the French Committee of National Liberation were firmly established and in a sense enthroned, had to be considered. The Algiers Administration—in all but name a full provisional government—became more and more responsive to the views and clamant demands of the resistance movement inside France. The representation in the Consultative Committee drew much of its strength and inspiration from that source, and so, too, did the Committee. Within

this period fell the trial of Pucheu, which excited so much attention not only in metropolitan and imperial France but also in Great Britain and the United States. Pucheu was a former Minister of the Interior in the Vichy Government. In that capacity he collaborated with the enemy, he assisted the Gestapo in its sinister work, he remained in office when his countrymen and countrywomen were taken out as hostages and shot. The Council of Resistance in France had already sentenced him to death, and it would have been surprising indeed if the Algiers trial did not rouse the most passionate feelings. The court which tried him was constituted according to Republican practice and the procedure was traditional.

It was inevitable, however, that the trial should assume a definitely political significance. In judging it one has to bear in mind that some of the witnesses who testified against Pucheu had themselves suffered at his hands and that most of them were only too familiar with his treatment of French patriots. The proceedings may not have conformed to British ideas, but against that it has to be remembered that France was an occupied country and that her citizens were being maltreated daily, deported, and handed over to the German firing squads. The pent-up bitterness of many months of deep anguish was directed at Pucheu. He was found *Guilty* of treason and misuse of authority and was sentenced to death. His appeals to a higher court and to General de Gaulle himself were rejected. He died bravely on March 20. He asked that he might give the order to fire, and the request was granted. Thus *épuration* was fulfilled. Many Frenchmen accepted the sentence as just and inevitable. For them it was an act of atonement. That the Algiers Administration was not moved by mere vengeance was shown by its refusal to bring to trial many other prominent collaborators who were in its hands. It preferred that these should be tried in France after her liberation.

A notable event in the development of resurgent and resistant France was a meeting at Marrakesh in French Morocco between Mr. Churchill, who was recuperating there from his illness, and General de Gaulle. One matter discussed was a more liberal supply of arms to the men of the *maquis*, and it is probable that French wishes were to a large extent met, although in some quarters the strange idea still persisted that to arm French patriots was to pave the way to civil war. There is no doubt that many French people hoped for something more tangible from the meeting in the form of a recognition of the Committee of National Liberation as the provisional government of the Republic. Nor is there much doubt

that many people in Britain also were hoping for some more definitive statement of policy. It was not forgotten that General de Gaulle was the first outstanding Frenchman to raise his voice in 1940 in denunciation of the capitulation and to rally his countrymen to continued resistance. Equally it was recalled that he had mobilized the French Empire in support of the Allied cause. There was much dissatisfaction that, although other governments were recognized, the Committee of National Liberation was put into a lower category. This arose from the fact that English people were not only anxious to see a revival of the old *entente* but were also acutely conscious that never again should the national interest be endangered by allowing the land of France to pass under hostile control.

For its part the Committee of National Liberation went to the extreme limit to assure the Western democracies that once France was freed she would have the fullest right to choose the government of her own liking. This was strikingly shown in the plan drawn up for the interim period after the eviction of the enemy from the national territory. It naturally provided for the rigorous exclusion of all those who had collaborated with the Germans and with Vichy. For the first time women were given the right to vote and to sit in the legislative assemblies. The stages were laid down by which a new President and a new Government should be elected. There was in fact nothing in the plan as finally approved to support the suspicion that the Committee wished to impose itself willy-nilly on the people of France or that General de Gaulle sought to exercise dictatorial powers in the new France which was clearly arising. These matters apart, the first quarter of 1944 showed to friend and foe alike that France was once more a power to be reckoned with and that in the struggles ahead—struggles that would in part be fought out on the soil of France itself—her people would be lacking neither in dignity nor in the spirit of self-sacrifice.

B. ITALY'S SLOW AWAKENING

The high hopes which some lovers of Italy entertained that once the Fascist system was overthrown the freed people would rise in all their might and majesty were soon to be dashed. As the months passed it became apparent that the corrupting influence of Mussolini and his gang had gone far and deep and that the nation as a whole was thoroughly demoralized. Signs of a new *Risorgimento* were slow to make their appearance. For the most part, the Italians living in the liberated provinces were at first content to leave the waging of the war to the Allies while they themselves returned to the ways of peace.

There were several reasons for this apart from the debasing effect of 20 years of Fascism and the disillusionment of defeat. For one thing, the liberated Sicilians had only a tepid interest in events on the mainland, and with the conquest of their island there was a revival of separatism. Suspicions that this movement was fostered by the British Government were without any foundation, as was the allegation that they intended to retain Sicily after the war because of its strategical importance in the Central Mediterranean. The Sicilians in fact had no marked enthusiasm for war at the side of the Allies. In the liberated provinces of the mainland the spirit was rather more robust and realistic, but there also the *malaise* was only too well marked. The heart of the resistance movement was in the industrial north, and there the Germans, aided and abetted by Mussolini's Neo-Fascists, were masters. The most daring and vigorous leaders were thus for the time being denied to the new Italy in the making, and many observers were convinced that not until the north was redeemed would it be possible to discern the trend of the next evolution.

King Victor Emmanuel was in an unenviable position. His close association with the discredited Fascist régime and his tacit condonation of its misrule and its many crimes made his name anathema to large sections in Italy. His removal was justified on every ground except

that of expediency. The Allied Governments decided, however, that with critical military operations in progress and only one-third of the country freed it was wiser not to insist on the immediate abdication of the King or to raise the wider issue of monarchy *versus* republic. What weighed with the Allies was the defeat of the enemy, and the last thing they wanted was passionate political controversy and disunion behind the front. It has to be acknowledged that the King conducted himself with dignity and acted with common sense in a painful and difficult situation. Broadcasting to the nation on January 1, he said :

There is but one duty and one right for all—to serve our country loyally, to liberate her as soon as possible from the foe who tortures and oppresses her. In the sacred name of Italy I call on you to rally round me. Let every personal resentment be overcome, and every special project be postponed.

In putting first the defeat and eviction of the Germans the King showed more realism than some of his countrymen, but it cannot be said that his appeal to rally round his own person had any great effect. Indeed, the parties forming the democratic front in no way moderated their agitation against the King and, not less important, against Marshal Badoglio. Their case was that until both had been removed from the scene the democratic movement could not pull its full weight either in the war or in the direction of affairs in southern Italy. It was strongly asserted that behind the King and the Marshal old-time Fascists were seizing power, and any idea of co-operating with the existing Government was rejected.

In the Allied countries a more favourable view was taken—at least of the Marshal, whose loyalty was never in dispute and whose earnestness in dissolving the complex organization which the Fascists had built up was unmistakable. Speaking in the House of Commons on February 22, Mr. Churchill said :

I am not yet convinced that any other government can be formed at the present time in Italy which would command the same obedience from the Italian armed forces.

This tribute did much to strengthen the Marshal's position, particularly as it followed closely on the transfer to Italian authority of the territories south of the northern boundaries of the provinces of Salerno and Potenza, including Sicily and Sardinia. An even more dramatic gesture came when the Soviet Government decided to establish diplomatic relations with the Badoglio Government. The initiative was taken by the Italians, but the Soviet decision, announced on March 13—which is

believed to have been taken without prior consultation with the British and American Governments—was everywhere recognized as a portent. Some alarm had been caused in Italy by the knowledge that the Russian Government had asked for some Italian warships after the Italian surrender and by President Roosevelt's statement to the Press on March 3 that the question what Italian ships should operate with the Russian Navy had been "about half-decided." On March 9 Mr. Churchill relieved Italian anxieties by the statement in Parliament that at present no change was contemplated in the arrangements with the Italian naval authorities under which Italian ships and crews take part in the common struggle against the enemy in the theatres where they now operate. It was understood later that the Western Allies held that the Russian request might be better met out of Anglo-American resources. It was inferred, perhaps wrongly, that the reopening of Italo-Russian diplomatic relations meant that the U.S.S.R. would not claim a share of the Italian Navy. Italians themselves were pleased and even proud that a Great Power like Russia should have thus raised their standing in the world. But there was more to it than that. The decision had a marked and immediate effect on domestic politics. On March 28, Palmiro Togliatti, a Communist, who was better known as Ercoli, and who had spent most of his exile in Moscow during the reign of Mussolini, arrived in southern Italy. He took over the leadership of the Communist Party, and, clearly expressing the wishes of the Kremlin, he urged collaboration with the Badoglio Government with a view to prosecuting the war with the maximum vigour. This counsel, so much at variance with recent criticism of the Marshal, put the whole of the democratic movement in a dilemma, for, as the Bari Congress of the Committee of National Liberation held late in January had shown, co-operation in the Government had presupposed the immediate abdication of the King.

In occupied Italy the resistance movement continued its campaign in spite of the ruthlessness with which the Germans and the Neo-Fascists acted against its leaders

and members. A remarkable manifestation was a strike which, even on the enemy's own showing, involved 200,000 workers in Milan, Florence, and Turin. The workers' demands were that the Germans must cease deportations and military conscription, that food supplies for workers and their families must be improved, and that all arrested strikers must be released and those sent to Poland be allowed to return home. There is some evidence that employers sympathized with the strike. In any case, it was a heartening demonstration of anti-German and anti-Fascist spirit. Moreover, sabotage was on the increase, and an official German announcement that 320 Italian hostages had been shot as a reprisal for the killing of 32 Germans by "Communists acting on Badoglio's orders" was another indication of the widespread and active opposition with which the enemy had to contend. Under Mussolini something like vendetta rule obtained in the north. In a broadcast he had said, "We pass from the stage of a martyr's war to an active war fought on the battlefield," but this was a mere characteristic boast.

The evidence showed that the fallen dictator had lost all standing. He could do no more than take vengeance against members of the Fascist Grand Council who were in his power and who had been concerned in the vote which brought about his dismissal. At Castel Vecchio, Verona, on January 8, the trial began of 19 leading Fascists, only five of whom, however, were actually in custody. Of the five, four were sentenced to death. They were Count Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, Foreign Minister from 1936 to February, 1943, and later Ambassador to the Vatican; Marshal de Bono, aged 76, who commanded the Italian armies during the first part of the Abyssinian war; Marinelli, former Under-Secretary of the Fascist Ministry of Transport; and Carlo Pareschi, a former Fascist Minister of Agriculture. Edda, Mussolini's daughter and Ciano's wife, interceded with her father for her husband's life, although she and Count Ciano had been at variance for some years. Mussolini, however, was adamant. The four were shot on the morn-

ing of January 11. It is said that Marshal de Bono bore himself bravely to the last. Ciano was a pitiful figure, and it is reported that he was shot, not standing but bound to a chair. It was a sorry end for a once promising diplomatist who had prostituted his talents to the interested championship of an evil cause.

2 : OTHER VICTIMS

In Chapter I of this volume the reader will have found an account of the unhappy persistence of the breach between Russia and Poland. Subsections in Chapter II have dealt with the affairs of Greece and Yugoslavia, while the opening section of this chapter records developments in the free and the occupied regions of France and Italy. The state of the occupied countries to be mentioned in this section remained no less materially miserable than before, but their peoples had at least the consolation of hope, firmer and better grounded than at any previous period since the German hosts overran Europe. They were still abominably treated ; German civilians, fearing the wrath to come, sometimes behaved more humanely or at least more politely to the conquered, but the soldiers were, if anything, more brutal, and the Gestapo as cruel and as murderous as ever. The food situation grew worse, for the Germans had to be given enough though the conquered might starve, and it threatened to deteriorate still further. Everywhere the death-rate rose, especially among children, and the increase of tuberculosis and of other diseases and neuroses caused by malnutrition, anxiety, fear and overwork aroused great anxiety for the future.

Here is a necessarily brief record of the chief events in seven countries which remained under the German yoke.

On January 7 M. Mikolajczyk in the course of the **Poland** broadcast to the Polish people to which reference has been made in Chapter I of this volume, announced that the "underground Government" in Poland was now headed by a representative of the Government in London. After telling his audience that the Polish State had never

ceased to exist, but that "its organs have had to become secret, under the pressure of events," except those which had remained in the open to carry on their duties outside the country, he continued :

Acting in consultation with our authorities in Poland I submitted to the Cabinet—I was then Minister for Home Affairs—the draft of a decree concerning the temporary organization of administration on the territories of the Polish Republic, which was duly signed on September 1, 1942, by the President, by General Sikorski, and by all the members of the Government. In making public the existence of such a decree we desire to inform the Polish citizens in the home country about the legal foundations of the authority and competence of that member of the Polish Cabinet who, as deputy Prime Minister, is charged with the duties of Polish Government delegate in Poland. He has authority to carry out all the functions of the Government concerning home administration.

The Government delegate carries out his duties in accordance with the orders and instructions of the Government of the Republic, with the assistance of his office and its network of administrative offices, acting in close co-operation with the Polish political representation and the commander of the Polish underground army. Thus the hard State duty of assuring the continuity of the legal Government in Poland is being carried on.

The Government Delegate informed the Government in London on February 3 that a Council of National Unity composed of delegates of the four main political parties, National Democrats, Social Democrats, Christian Labour and Peasants had been formed in Poland. News of the organization of the military forces of the movement reached London later, and on March 2 the Minister of Interior, M. Banaczyk, gave the Press the following account of its progress :

The underground forces were divided into two main groups—the special detachments numbering nearly 250,000 men, and the more numerous reserve units. The first waged active war on the Germans ; the reserve forces awaited the signal for a general rising. The Germans had in Poland a force of six S.S. divisions, about 50,000 police, and about 15 divisions of garrison and second-line troops. In addition 23 divisions stationed in Poland were in reserve for the Russian front or resting after their service there. During the second half of 1943 there had been 81 open encounters with the Germans. Eighteen senior German officials and 1,163 Gestapo agents had been killed, 83 goods trains wrecked and large quantities of petrol, rolling stock and stores destroyed.

The killings or executions of German tyrants continued. News reached London early in February of the killing of Major-General Fritz Kutschera, who had been appointed head of the Warsaw Gestapo early in the autumn, and was responsible for the mass executions of October and November, 1943. His car was bombed and machine-

gunned and his armed escort of five Gestapo officials perished with him on February 1. The Germans retorted by shooting 133 hostages and levied a fine of 100,000,000 zloty on Warsaw.

In a broadcast to Poland from London on February 7, M. Banaczyk said that between October 12, 1943, and February 4, 1944, the Germans had executed 1,107 persons in Warsaw in public, and had publicly shot about 5,000 persons in other Polish cities. The Poles had met these atrocities by concerted attacks on German military transport and had wrecked three trains, one of them an express train packed with troops. They estimated that 1,000 Germans had been killed in these attacks. Later in February it became known that in an attack on a train, Frank, the infamous Governor of Poland, narrowly escaped with his life when the train on which he was travelling to Lvov (Lemberg) was blown up. A hundred Poles were executed in Cracow on February 2 by way of reprisal.

One of the Polish underground newspapers published the following account of a remarkable incident at Bielszowice in Silesia. A Pole was condemned for belonging to the underground movement, and a crowd of miners on their way to work were driven by the Gestapo to watch the execution. At that moment a squad of British prisoners of war, carrying shovels, passed by. Taking advantage of the general confusion, a British corporal ran to the head of the column and gave the order: "March to attention—eyes right!" The squad paid their "compliments" as they marched past the condemned man, who shouted: "Long live Poland," as the noose was put round his neck.

After the signature of the Soviet-Czech Pact the attitude ^{Bohemia} of the Russian Press towards the Czechs became more urbane. That lively review, *War and the Working Class*, had previously been attacking them for not showing sufficient activity in sabotage and for their "wait-and-see" attitude. In fact, the Czechs did succeed in doing much damage to the German cause. The sentences of death or imprisonment passed by German courts on many men and women for "aiding fugitive prisoners of war," assisting political opponents of the German régime to escape arrest, listening in to broadcasts from enemy countries, and committing acts of sabotage in factories, were eloquent on that score.

A correspondent describing the state of the country at the end of the fifth year of the German occupation (*The Times*, March 15), said *inter alia* :

"Food is becoming ever scarcer. Rationing is perfunctory and prices in the black market are fantastic. A pound of lard costs the equivalent of £2 and a cigarette 2s." Nevertheless the Germans still hoped to influence the young, many of whom did not remember the days of Czech freedom.

Youth organizations were compulsory, Germanization was the "keynote" of official activities. Superficially the influx of Germans to the number of 2,500,000 from the Reich made the task easier, the more so as they were encouraged to bear arms for self-defence. But the old hostility was as fierce as ever and the Germans threatened to slaughter the Czechs before they left Bohemia should they be forced to surrender it.

The Czech workers in Germany were no better off since the discriminatory rationing system prevented them from buying enough food. Nevertheless, they had carried out effective sabotage and "it has been found necessary to put one German in charge of every ten Czechs." Three hundred Czechs had been executed in Berlin alone.

Denmark During the months that had passed since the resignation of the Scavenius Cabinet on August 29, 1943, the Germans had made several attempts to persuade the Ministry to return to office, but they failed. Their attempts to find a Danish quisling to form a puppet government were equally unsuccessful. The King remained a prisoner in his castle of Sorgenfri. Only about a tenth of the Danish Jews had fallen into German hands in spite of Hitler's orders. The rest, nearly 7,000 in number, were assisted by the population to escape to Sweden. Sabotage increased rapidly and industrial output declined. The Germans at first tried to meet sabotage by shooting or deporting the few Danish patriots on whom they could lay their hands, but the great majority, helped by their compatriots, evaded arrest and returned to the attack. As for the small Danish Nazi Party under Fritz Clausen, it melted away and its leader found it safer to live in Germany. Its remnants, with a few gaol-birds, were formed by the Germans into what they called the "Schalberg Korps." The Germans dressed some in uniforms closely resembling those of the Royal Guard, but with swastika shoulder flashes. Others they employed to spy upon and denounce their fellow-countrymen. Several of these traitors were shot. The enemy retaliated by kidnapping and killing Hr. Kaj (pronounced Ka-e) Munck, a leading Danish playwright, and a preacher, who had been in the forefront of the national movement since the German occupation. The inquiry opened by the Danish police had to be dropped when it was discovered that Gestapo men and Schalbergers were concerned in the crime. Several

other prominent Danes were attacked, some fatally, by German or pro-German assassins.

On January 8 the Germans shipped over 350 Norwegian Norway students and some Norwegian policemen to detention camps in Germany, a continuation of their attack on the cultural life of Norway which had begun in November. On the night of January 24 the German News Agency announced :

"The Führer received the Norwegian Premier Quisling in the presence of the chief of the Reich Chancery, Minister Dr. Lammers, and of the leader of the party Chancery, Reich Leader Martin Bormann, for a long conversation. A number of important questions regarding the European continent and the future of the Germanic peoples were discussed in the spirit of the coming struggle." Jonas Lie (Norwegian police chief) and Alf Whist (Minister without portfolio), who had accompanied Quisling, were afterwards received by the Führer. The Reich Commissar for Norway, Josef Terboven, and Lieut.-Colonel Neumann (S.S. Group Leader for Norway) were also present.

The purpose of these meetings was not clear at first, but it was reported in February that a sudden levy of young men for labour and perhaps military purposes was contemplated, although no action was taken at first. But in March it became known that Quisling had offered Hitler three divisions of Norwegian troops, and that the Germans, while doubting the military value of these conscripts, contemplated an extension of the Labour Service in order to obtain labour battalions for military purposes and to increase the supply of hands for the war industries of the Reich.

The refusal of the vast majority of Dutch students to Holland sign the "declaration of obedience" demanded by the Germans in 1943 brought university life in Holland almost to a standstill. Less than 400 students registered for the academic year 1944. About 3,500 students had been deported to the Reich and to the Eastern front to work in conditions of extreme hardship. Over 6,000 "went underground" to avoid incurring the suspicion of having conformed.

The Germans, so the Dutch Government learnt in February, made preparations to forestall attempts at

invasion and at the same time to inflict the maximum possible damage on the population. It became known that they had planned

"the extensive flooding of large parts of the western provinces, which would result in inestimable, perhaps irremediable damage." Although Seyss-Inquart had proclaimed on January 24 that no large-scale evacuation was intended, the German-controlled *Haagsche Post* shortly afterwards published a lurid article on the measures which the Germans might adopt, such as the opening of sluice gates, the breaking of bridges, and the flooding of towns. "Thousands will be drowned, towns will be cut off from supplies, epidemics will break out and fleeing masses block all traffic to the east." Other pro-Nazi or German-controlled newspapers deprecated the alarmist tone of the article, but it was known that the enemy was busily rounding-up reserve officers who had "gone underground," that he had disarmed part of the regular police force and that he had forbidden all private telephoning in many cities in western Holland. The intention seemed to be "to apply to Holland . . . that system, already carried out in Poland, whereby all countries bordering on Germany will emerge from the conflict in a seriously weakened condition." (*The Times*, February 28.)

Belgium
and
Luxembourg

In January the Belgian Government received a list of 1,200 Belgians executed by the Germans since the beginning of the occupation. Of these 700 were hostages. They issued a declaration calling attention to the inhuman treatment of Belgian civilians, and containing the warning "that the brutalities inflicted on Belgians while they are in prison or being questioned, as well as the unjust sentences and arbitrary detention of which they are the victims, will be the subject of adequate penalties when the hour of liberation and the settlement of accounts arrives. Leaders and subordinates . . . all will pay in person for the violations of international law which we here denounce to an outraged civilized world."

German preparations against invasion were actively pressed. Part of the population of Ostend was ordered to move inland. Special courts with a quicker procedure were instituted to deal with sabotage. Executions of hostages continued. No less than 71 were executed, ten on the personal order of General von Falkenhausen, 61 by order of General von Hammerstein, German commanding officer in Brussels, during February.

In Liège 20,000 of the inhabitants escaped into the country to avoid forced labour or deportation to Germany. Several pro-Nazi Belgians were killed during the quarter. "Persons unknown," probably Rexists or Gestapo men, murdered M. Bovesse, a former Cabinet Minister and Governor of Namur, at the end of January. He had

previously been held by the Germans as a hostage for several months.

3 : NON-BELLIGERENTS AND NEUTRALS

On February 14 the Swedish Foreign Office announced ^{Sweden} that a protest was being sent to Moscow about bombs dropped on February 12 at Haparanda on the Finno-Swedish border. Bombs fell in the Stockholm area for the first time in the war on the night of February 22-23, causing no serious casualties. Fragments bore Russian lettering, but the Russian High Command, whose bombers were engaged in night operations against Finland, denied that any of their machines had trespassed over the Stockholm area, and it was possible that the Germans, who had much captured Russian war material, might have wished to provoke a Russo-Swedish incident. Several U.S. bombers force-landed or were forced down in Swedish territory during the quarter and their crews were interned.

Speaking from the Throne at the opening of the Riksdag on January 11, King Gustav referred to the "severe tribulations inflicted on our northern neighbours."

He added: "Their fate grieves us deeply. We heartily share their hopes of regaining peace and freedom." He expressed confidence in regard to Sweden's chances of preserving peace and freedom, but said that the general position made it impossible to reduce vigilance and preparedness. He announced a special Budget containing peace preparation proposals which would be made known later. The ordinary Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1945, showed a total expenditure of 4,187,000,000 Kr., of which 1,879,000,000 Kr. was for national defence. The rearmament five-year plan, launched in 1942, had been speeded up and would be completed in four years for the army and coastal artillery.

An appeal for financial support of homeless Jewish science was issued in Sweden early in February. It was signed by the King's brother, Prince Eugen, by the head of the National Church, by Dr. Unden, formerly Foreign Minister, and by the rectors of every Swedish University, among other citizens. The funds to be raised were intended for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem which was receiving many homeless Jewish scientists.

Switzer-
land

British and U.S. aircraft came down in Switzerland on several occasions during the quarter. On March 17 an official announcement issued in Berne said that the Swiss Legation in London

had been instructed to register a strong protest against the violation of Swiss territory by the R.A.F. on the night of March 15-16, which "is regarded as of a particularly serious character." On March 18 as many as 16 American aircraft landed or crashed on Swiss soil. One of them was shot down by Swiss fighters. The crews were interned.

Spain

The differences between Spain and the Allied Governments which came to a head early in the quarter and were afterwards the subject of negotiations are chronicled in the third section of Chapter I of this volume. The internal affairs of Spain were marked by evidence of a partial economic recovery and at the same time of a revival of interest in political questions. Interest in politics, however, has so far outrun political competence among all Spanish parties that friendly foreign observers might be pardoned for feeling no particular enthusiasm at this revival. It was generally believed that the defeat of the Axis would mean the disappearance of the Falange, but no one could say with any confidence what sort of *régime* would take its place. It was understood that Don Juan, the heir to the throne, had refused collaboration with the Falange. It was known that the prospects of agreement between the various Republican groups were not good, and it was generally felt that the last word might lie with the Army, which, while associated with the Falange, preserved its independence of it. In any case the Spanish Government were obviously trying to steer on quite another tack from the over-confident "non-belligerency" which they had proclaimed after the collapse of France. But they could not all bring themselves as yet to realize the danger of the pro-Axis policy for which they had long stood, and there was evidence that Count Jordana's efforts to bring about a better understanding with the United Nations were frequently neutralized by some of his colleagues and by pro-German elements in the Falange and in the bureaucracy.

An Amnesty Bill for the conditional liberation of 5,263

convicts was approved by the Cabinet on March 2. On March 19 Señor Eduardo Aunos, Minister of Justice, when closing the Porlier prison at Madrid, told the Correspondent of *The Times* that this was one of 23 prisons which had been emptied and closed during the past year. He added that the task his Ministry had set itself was to hasten the return to judicial normality by liquidating the processes of military justice which were instituted in October, 1936, to deal with all political and criminal cases in the areas occupied by the Nationalists. Prisoners were being released at the rate of about 1,000 weekly, and he expected that within a few months the number of persons in prison would not exceed that in normal times. Of the 200,000 persons released under successive amnesties, less than 200 had been rearrested for breaking the laws again.

On March 24 four well-known professors of Madrid University were arrested for signing a Monarchist motion requesting the return of Don Juan. The document already bore 100 signatures from Spanish university men of prominence.

The tension between Spain and the British and American Governments was followed with interest and some concern in Portugal. The relations between Spain and Portugal were friendly; indeed it might have been said that Dr. Salazar, the Portuguese Prime Minister, had done much to help Spain partially to extricate herself from the somewhat perilous position into which the pro-Axis policy of the Falange and its leaders (General Franco not excepted) had brought her. Opening the second congress of his own party, "Uniao Nacional," on February 8, Dr. Salazar told members that it would be Portugal's greatest achievement at the present time if she could achieve three aims, viz. :

(1) To remain neutral and at peace without prejudice to the British alliance and its guarantees; (2) to retain her independence and her territorial integrity in a world which would be re-made under an international reorganization tending towards the formation of large economic and political groups; (3) to keep the revolution alive within the spirit of the times and without destroying the main principles of Christian civilization. In the first aim Portugal had succeeded; of the second it was still impossible to judge. There could be no doubt of the third, for "we are sure of our doctrine." As regards the details of foreign policy, Portugal's chief difficulty during war-time was and would be to co-ordinate her neutrality with her position as an ally of Great Britain. After the war

it might be difficult to maintain Portuguese principles in a new international order.

There were many indications that the future of the small nations preoccupied Portuguese attention and in March the Press indulged in some decidedly gloomy speculation, taking the cases of Finland and Poland as a text. An interesting sign of the times was the publication in the *Diario das Noticias* of a leading article on the future relations between Great Britain and the Continent. It urged that never in her history had Britain such need of a peaceful and orderly Western Europe, and that never had Western Europe so needed British leadership.

A victory of the United Nations might confront Europe with the hegemony of 131,000,000 Americans and of 180,000,000 Russians, and of a single truly European Power, Great Britain, with but 48,000,000 inhabitants. If the structure and traditions of Western Europe were to be maintained, Holland, Belgium, France, Italy and the Iberian countries must be grouped around Britain; and if, in fact, this Anglo-Western-Latin *bloc* should be envisaged by British peace policy, its importance should not be lost sight of by those responsible for the military policy of Great Britain.

Turkey

Turkish relations with the Allies have been dealt with in Chapter I of this volume. In January Marshal Fevzi Chakmak retired after having been for 20 years Chief of the Turkish General Staff. General Kiazim Orbay took his place. General Salih Omurtag was appointed Deputy C.G.S.

An earthquake in Northern Anatolia destroyed about 7,000 houses and killed 2,382 people.

CHAPTER VIII

KING, MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENT

I : THE KING AND QUEEN

In the early months of 1944 the King made a series of visits to the troops stationed in the island fortress of Britain, preparing for the assault which should liberate enslaved Europe. His Majesty was several times visited by the Prime Minister, and also received in audience General Eisenhower, on his appointment as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, and most of the officers appointed to commands in the different Services.

The King and Queen went to the headquarters of R.A.F. Bomber Command on February 7, where Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris received them and presented members of his staff. Three days afterwards they visited stations of the R.A.F. Pathfinder Force, and heard at first hand stories of raids on Berlin and other targets from the pilots of this specialist formation. Air Vice-Marshal D. C. Bennett, commanding the Pathfinders, conducted them round the stations, one of which was manned entirely by the R.C.A.F. They also visited a station of the U.S. Eighth Air Force, meeting there Major-General Doolittle, and inspecting Fortress and Liberator bombers.

After these visits to the Air Force the King toured the Army commands. On February 12 he spent three hours with General Sir Bernard Montgomery and staff officers watching from a dug-out an assault exercise by picked troops. A two-day visit to other invasion troops followed on February 23 and 24, and in a tour of over 300 miles by road and rail the King saw Army units practising beach assaults and night raids. The battle practice was realistic, and at one point the King and a divisional general and

his staff had to take cover. On February 28 the King was joined by the Queen and Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret on a tour of inspection of troops in training which occupied eight hours. The Princesses were given a hearty reception by men of many different units.

Other visits to troops in training followed on March 2 and March 9, when the King inspected Canadian units preparing for the second front. On March 16 he went to spend two days with airborne and armoured units, and saw a big-scale exercise with paratroops, air landing units and reconnaissance squadrons all engaged. The "march past" of a formidable number of Churchill tanks was the feature of a visit to one armoured unit. A week later the King made another tour, lasting two days, and this time was accompanied by the Queen and Princess Elizabeth. Scottish troops and armoured infantry were among the units they saw at a variety of invasion exercises.

In contrast to these days with the Forces, on February 9 the King and Queen spent a day among the miners of south and west Yorkshire. They travelled overnight from London to Wakefield, and from there visited many collieries and mining villages, having luncheon in the colliery canteen at Elsecar with the miners. On February 18 their Majesties took Princess Elizabeth with them to Wembley for the first time to see the football match between England and Scotland. The King and the Duke of Gloucester lunched on March 8 with the Royal College of Surgeons. The Duke was admitted to the honorary fellowship of the College, and the King attended to see the ceremony in his capacity as Visitor. Later in the month the Queen paid a visit to Glamis Castle to see her father, who celebrated his 89th birthday. When King Peter of Yugoslavia and Princess Alexandra of Greece were married in London on March 20, the King and Queen attended with three other monarchs—the King of the Hellenes, the King of Norway, and the Queen of the Netherlands.

Much speculation was set at rest by the official announcement on February 12 that the King did not contemplate making any change in the style and title of Princess Elizabeth on the occasion of her approaching eighteenth birthday. It had been suggested that when she came of age the Princess might be created the first Princess of Wales.

The early announcement to the contrary was probably occasioned by the fact that the first civic tour which the Princess undertook was to South Wales. She accompanied the King and Queen on a visit which lasted two days through the mining valleys, war factories, docks and civic centres,



GENERAL KOENIG

visiting Swansea, Cardiff, Merthyr and the Treforest trading estate among other places.

"Salute the Soldier" week in London was the occasion for a march past of representative units of the British armed forces at Buckingham Palace, and the King, with the Queen and Princess Elizabeth beside him, stood for almost half an hour before the Palace gates taking the salute as thousands of Service men and women marched past him in one of the largest and most impressive parades seen in London during the war.

A number of investitures were held at Buckingham Palace, and at one of these at the end of February the next-of-kin of four men who had been posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross were given the decorations by the King. The V.C.s were Flight-Sergeant Arthur Aaron, Commander John Wallace Linton, Lord Lyell and Lieut.-Colonel Derek Seagrim.

2 : MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENT

The political scene was somewhat disturbed when the New Year opened. The strong breezes of domestic controversy ruffled the surface, and party political consciousness was more deeply stirred than it had been for some time by a sequence of by-elections which marked the early weeks of the year. Mr. Churchill, home again in surprising vigour after his illness, contributed a rather harsh corrective to the irritations deriving from the sudden emergence as "Independent" candidates of persons of known political faiths. The electoral truce suffered a number of jolts, and was the subject of questionings and discussion, but remained the acknowledged policy of all the main parties.

It should be emphasized that all this disturbance was superficial. The Government lost two of the seven by-elections, but retained the confidence of an overwhelming majority in the country. In spite of suffering its first defeat in the House of Commons in March, Mr. Churchill's administration went generally unquestioned and even applauded in its conduct of the war. The distemper was almost entirely on the home front, and there were several factors which helped to intensify the condition.

Two subjects could perhaps be regarded as exceptions.

One was the interpretation of the Atlantic Charter in relation to Germany and the other the question of British tank production. Mr. Stokes and one or two other members had been pursuing this indefatigably in questions to Ministers and by pressure on the Government for a debate; and there were others who also felt some concern but did not give public expression to it.

On March 2, Mr. Eden stated the Government's readiness to take part in a debate, with the stipulation that it must be in secret, when the Army Estimates were discussed. For technical reasons this did not afford the most suitable occasion, and a fortnight later a full debate in secret session was definitely arranged.

The Prime Minister was questioned on March 16 by Mr. Stokes about reports on the inadequacy of British tanks in the field and the waste in production in this country. He gave a short, emphatic reply, repudiating the allegations and asserting that when next the British Army took the field in country suitable for the use of armour they would be found to be equipped in a manner at least equal to the forces of any other country in the world. Supplementary questions on this occasion brought to light the interesting fact that a memorandum sent to the Prime Minister a few days before by the Select Committee on National Expenditure, for the consideration of the War Cabinet, related to tanks. It was ruled by the Speaker that this document must be regarded as confidential and could not be produced nor referred to in debate.

Views were divided on the desirability of a debate, which most of the Labour Party and some in other parties held to be untimely. Those who took the contrary view, that such debate was necessary and justified, had their way, and the debate took place in secret on March 24.

In regard to the Atlantic Charter, the specific statements by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden on Germany's position prompted a group of Labour M.P.s, supported by others ranging from Liberal to Independent in outlook, to crystallize their discontent into a motion. This motion, which secured about 70 signatures, regretted recent Government statements conveying the impression that the provisions of the Charter did not "as a matter of right, apply to Germany or any other enemy country" as having brought the Charter into disrepute and stiffened the support of enemy peoples to their Governments, and urged the Government to make it clear that the principles of the Charter were of world-wide application. Mr. Churchill, when questioned, described the motion as hostile and having the appearance of a vote of censure, and said if that were the correct interpretation the Government would certainly find time for it to be debated.

Most of the signatories were reluctant to take the matter thus far, although many people, outside the House as well as inside, thought that some clarification of the Government's attitude to the Atlantic Charter was desirable.

Between January 7 and March 30 seven constituencies elected new members. Three of them—Kirkcaldy, Attercliffe (Sheffield), and North Camberwell, all Labour seats, held uneventful elections and returned the Government and party candidate. The other four, previously held by Conservatives, were vigorously contested, and two were lost. The spear-head of this attack was the vociferous newcomer, Sir Richard Acland's Common Wealth Party. At Skipton its challenge was direct and successful; at West Derbyshire and Bury St. Edmunds it had a large share in the work and organization of Independent candidates.

The by-election at Skipton, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, was the 201st since Parliament was elected late in 1935. (In eight years, therefore, almost one-third of the membership of the House of Commons had changed.) Lieut. Hugh Lawson, R.E., carried the banner of the new party to victory against Mr. H. Riddiough, a local manufacturer, who was the Conservative candidate, and Alderman J. Toole, standing as an Independent, but formerly a Labour M.P. for Salford and a life-long member of the Labour Party. Mr. Toole's intervention was regarded as reflecting the indignation widely felt in the Labour Party at the way in which Common Wealth—formed since the electoral truce was made, and therefore not bound by its conditions—was taking advantage of the Labour Party's past work in advocating a political platform substantially similar. Lieut. Lawson, with a majority of 221, was the second Common Wealth M.P. to be elected. Mr. Toole was expelled from the Manchester Labour Party for having broken the truce. The defeat of the Government candidate, which was a shock as well as a surprise, was regarded as evidence of the strong dissatisfaction existing with the Government's domestic record and preparations for post-war conditions.

The Brighton vacancy arose through the illness and resignation of the sitting member, Sir Cooper Rawson. The Conservative and Government candidate was Flight-Lieut. William Teeling, writer and traveller. At the last minute Mr. Dutton Briant, a barrister, brother of the Mayor of Brighton, was also nominated. The Prime Minister seized the occasion to express his views about those who claimed to support him in the war effort while at the same time advocating different policies in home affairs. In a letter to Flight-Lieut. Teeling he wrote :

"Your opponent, who styles himself Independent, is reported to claim that he stands in full support of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. I am sure the electors . . . will not be taken in by this attempted swindle." The phrase "attempted swindle" provoked much controversy and local resentment. In a subsequent letter Mr. Churchill accepted full and personal responsibility for the expression, which he said had not been used lightly or impatiently, adding: "It is this attitude of posing as a political friend and supporter of mine and trying to get votes thereby, while at the same time doing the utmost injury in his power to the cause I serve, that calls for censure." Mr. Briant polled the impressive total of 12,635 votes, but Flight-Lieut. Teeling won the seat with a majority of 1,959.

In spite of the Prime Minister's strictures on this occasion, Independent candidates appeared in the West Derby and Bury St. Edmunds elections. The West Derby contest had a marked local flavour. Lord Hartington, a young officer in the Coldstream Guards, son and heir of the Duke of Devonshire (himself a former M.P. for the division), was the Conservative Party's choice when Lieut.-Colonel Hunloke's resignation was announced; his principal opponent was Alderman Charles White, a well-known local man who resigned from the Labour Party to stand as an Independent. A Cavendish and a White had fought on the hustings before, and in 1918 Mr. White's father, a cobbler and a Liberal, won the seat. The last-minute intervention of Mr. Robert Goodall, a farm bailiff, produced the first example of an "austerity" campaign, with only one speech and no election address. His candidature did not affect the result, since he polled only 233 votes and lost his deposit. Lord Hartington was defeated by 4,561, and Alderman White elected.

The Common Wealth Party had provided most of Alderman White's organization and took a substantial part in the campaign. When the death in a railway accident of Lt.-Col. Heilgers caused the first election at Bury St. Edmunds since 1929, the Government candidate, Major E. M. Keatinge (Conservative), was opposed by Mrs. Corbett Ashby, calling herself "Independent Liberal," who had resigned the vice-presidency of the Liberal Party organization and the chairmanship of the Women's Liberal Federation to stand. Her candidature caused much perturbation among Liberals who, like the Labour Party, were officially observing the truce. The Prime Minister's reference to "the anti-Government candidate" in his letter to Major Keatinge certainly seemed merited, for she was supported by an alliance of Left groups which formed a united "progressive" front. The Government, following the precedent set in West Derby, when a Cabinet Minister (Mr. Ernest Brown) took part for the first time in a by-election since the electoral truce was made, sent down a strong team, including the Minister of Health, and showed its intention of intervening with greater weight in these contests. This time their candidate won, and Major Keatinge was elected with a 2,584 majority.

Side by side with this recrudescence of party consciousness in the constituencies there was manifest a certain wilfulness among some sections in the House of Commons. Here it was not confined to those who professed the more extreme Left views, whether independently or within a party. The younger section of the Conservative Party, broadly those members associated with the Tory Reform

Committee, were in the picture as often as not, and indeed played the leading role in bringing about the Government's defeat. All these groups found material eminently suited to their purpose in the Bills dealing with post-war needs that were coming before Parliament. These afforded the opportunity for common action to press the Government to do greater good more quickly, and in consequence Ministers began to find themselves with disturbingly small majorities in the House.

These activities were defended by the argument that free competition among the parties in by-elections and on domestic policy was compatible with united support for the war effort and a Coalition Government. This was a theory with which Mr. Churchill would have nothing whatever to do. He took every occasion to reiterate and emphasize the need for the fullest national unity behind the Government in the face of impending vast operations in Western Europe.

Thus, in a second letter he wrote to the Government candidate at Brighton, Mr. Churchill pointed out that although a seat or two either way made no real difference to the Parliamentary majority, by-election votes against the National Government were unsettling blows at those on whom fell the task of bringing the country back to safety and peace. This letter also contained a warning against the "altogether unwarranted optimism" that had taken possession of large numbers of people. "There is a vain and foolish belief that the war will soon be over, that it is now as good as won, and that anyone is free to push personal or party ends without regard to the common interest."

Similarly, in his war review to the Commons on February 22, he observed : "There is, I gather, in some quarters the feeling that the way to win the war is to knock the Government about, keep them up to the collar, and harry them from every side, and I find that hard to bear with Christian faith." With a brief glance abroad at the corresponding implications of election year in the United States Mr. Churchill went on : "This atmosphere and mood at home accords none too well with the responsibilities and burdens which weigh heavily on His Majesty's Ministers, and which I can assure the House are very real and heavy. We are in the advent of the greatest joint operations between two allies that have ever been planned in history. There is the desire in this country in many quarters to raise the old controversies between the different parties. There is also a mood in the Anglo-American alliance to awaken slumbering prejudices and let them have their run. Yet Liberals, Labour men and Tories are fighting and dying together at the front, and working together in a thousand ways at home, and Britons and Americans are linked together in the noblest comradeship of war under the fire and flail of the enemy. My hope is that generous instincts of unity will not depart from us in these times of tremendous exertion and grievous sacrifice, and that we shall not fall apart,

abroad or at home, so as to become the prey of the little folk who exist in every country and who frolic alongside the juggernaut car of war to see what fun or notoriety they can extract from the proceedings."

Parliament reassembled after the Christmas recess on January 18, and was happily surprised to see the Prime Minister enter the Chamber a short time after the proceedings had begun. His return was wholly unexpected, and members rose in a body to give him a specially warm greeting. His appearance of restored health and vigour was accompanied by lively impromptu answers to supplementary questions. To one suggestion that he should relieve himself of some of his official duties to conserve his health, Mr. Churchill answered that he had "no changes at present to propose" in his routine. After meeting the House the Prime Minister went to have audience of the King, with whom he afterwards lunched.

The House settled down at once to continue the work of preparation for the period after the war which it had begun with the new Session. Its sittings were extended a day each week to keep up with the increasing amount of business. The major measure was the Education Bill, which in its 111 clauses and nine schedules embodied a scheme for the complete reconstruction of the country's education system. It was based on the proposals advanced in the White Paper of the previous July, modified in some respects as the result of the public discussion that had ensued.

The Bill redefined the powers and duties of the central authority, establishing for the first time a Minister and a Ministry with effective power to secure the development of a national policy in education. The school age was to be raised to 15 in April, 1945, and "as soon as practicable" afterwards to 16. There was to be provision also for better facilities for children handicapped by mental or physical disability, and for nursery schools. A system of part-time education in working hours for young persons up to the age of 18 was foreshadowed, and adequate and co-ordinated facilities for technical and adult education were to be developed. The new powers given to the Minister were to come into operation immediately the Bill was

passed, enabling the new administrative structure to be prepared in readiness for April, 1945. Within the following 12 months the county and county borough councils, who were to be the new local education authorities, would be required to prepare and submit development plans for primary and secondary education. Central advisory councils for England and Wales were to assist the Minister. The new statutory system of education was to be organized as a continuous process conducted in three successive stages—primary, secondary, and further—and detailed provisions were made in regard to the modification of the dual system and the giving of religious instruction in schools.

The Bill was given a unanimous second reading after a two-day debate on January 20 and 21. Mr. Butler, President of the Board of Education, who had worked untiringly to produce this great scheme of reform, spoke eloquently on education as the ally and not the competitor of employment, and on the provisions in regard to Church schools he claimed for his proposals a wide measure of support. The Committee stage of the Bill proceeded in a remarkably friendly atmosphere. It was outstanding for the manner in which the religious issue, on which so many previous attempts at reform had foundered, was faced with tolerance and a desire to seek in conference solutions acceptable to the opposing parties. In this the House was continuing the method the Minister had followed in preparing his Bill, and the result reflected the new purpose which animated the House—to subordinate other considerations to the children's welfare. There were other points of difficulty, notably the future role of some local education authorities in the new administrative scheme, and the raising of the school age. The demand that a date should be fixed at which the age should be raised to 16 was one Mr. Butler had to resist because of the unknown prospects relating to the supply of teachers and buildings, but the determination of members to leave no opportunity for delay in operating the reform led to a division in which the Government majority dropped to 35. The figures—172 votes to 137—represented the biggest vote recorded against the Government to that date (March 21). The progress made with the Bill was steady rather than swift, and its passage through Committee was uncompleted at the end of the quarter.

Other smaller Bills falling into the social reconstruction plan were in progress too. The Disabled Persons Employment Bill, introduced before Christmas, was to provide for the vocational training, industrial rehabilitation and registration of all disabled persons, whether they had been in the armed forces or not. On the second reading Mr. Tomlinson, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, had contended that since peace had

its casualties no less than war, the Bill was to be a permanent addition to the country's social services, and no distinction was to be made between those who had suffered disablement in the Forces and those whose disability was due to industrial or other accidents. Doubts were voiced at the time about this policy, and when the Bill reached the Committee stage on January 18 concern was expressed that ex-service men and women should have some priority of entry into the training centres : as one member put it, if there were to be a queue for admission, the disabled from the Services should be at the right end of it.

Mr. Bevin, Minister of Labour, was sympathetic, but preferred to seek the desired end by administrative action, pledging his Department to give preference to men and women from the Forces. This did not satisfy those who wanted the principle of preference incorporated in the Bill, and Mr. Bevin agreed to try to meet them. On January 27 he brought in a new clause to give effect to his promise. It provided that the Minister should "so exercise his discretion" in selecting persons for training and rehabilitation facilities when these were inadequate for all needing them "as to secure that preference shall be given" to those who had served whole-time in the Forces and women's services. Although the preference demand was opposed in some quarters this clause was accepted.

Important amendments of the law affecting the reinstatement in civil occupations of men and women in the Forces and certain auxiliary and civil defence services were proposed in the Reinstatement in Civil Employment Bill which came up for second reading.

It extended to volunteers the pledge of reinstatement in work already given to men and women called up under the National Service Acts. It laid down procedure for reinstatement, and established priorities giving preference to seniority in employment. As well as giving employees a qualified guarantee of continuity of employment for 26 weeks, it placed on the employer the obligation to reinstate an applicant at the first opportunity "reasonable and practicable" in his pre-war occupation, and on terms and conditions not less favourable than he would have had had he not joined the Forces. Alternatively, the employer must engage the man in the most favourable employment and on the most favourable terms possible.

The Bill was not opposed on second reading on February 3, although subject to the criticism from one side that it was of so little value that it amounted to no more than a political manoeuvre, and from the other that it needed to be strengthened. Both sides tended to regard it as more than it was—a supplement to the National Service Acts to extend the right of reinstatement to those who had volunteered. Mr. McCorquodale emphasized that it was not intended to create new jobs nor to be a charter of employment. Mr. Bevin later said that at the appropriate time the Government would reveal their plans for resettling in civil life all who had joined the Forces. In these comprehensive proposals would be included persons who had been taken from good jobs and directed to “inferior” ones and had thus paid a price for their service to their country.

The Commons spent February 1 and 2 discussing electoral reform. The debate was arranged to enable M.P.s to express their views on electoral matters before the Government finally framed the terms of reference for the proposed Speaker's Conference. It took place on a motion welcoming the Government's decision to set up such a conference and inviting the Speaker to preside.

Initiating the discussion, the Home Secretary suggested that the conference should be asked to examine, and if possible submit agreed recommendations on, these matters: redistribution of seats; reform of the franchise, both Parliamentary and local government; the conduct and costs of Parliamentary elections; and methods of election. He explained that “franchise reform” was intended to cover the business premises vote and the university vote, and the assimilation of the Parliamentary and local government franchise; and that methods of election would include such matters as proportional representation and the alternative vote.

The House was agreed on the necessity of redistribution, but was at the same time peculiarly aware of the difficulties, accentuated in war-time, arising from the movement of population. Much attention was given to the representation of minorities, but proportional representation, vigorously advocated by the Liberals, was shown to have few friends. Concern was expressed also about the effect of the existing level of election expenses on the character and composition of the House. Mr. Eden, as Leader of the House, in his final summing of the debate, expressed sympathy with the argument that election expenses should be further limited, particularly for the sake of younger men aspiring to enter Parliament.

A week later Mr. Herbert Morrison announced the Speaker's acceptance of the Prime Minister's invitation to preside over the conference, and stated that, having considered the suggestions made in the debate, and in view of the widely expressed desire that the conference should be enabled to consider the expenses of Parliamentary candidates and Members of Parliament in its wider aspects, the Government had decided to extend the terms of reference to cover this question.

A topic on which the House displayed an uneasy sensitiveness was the special legislation under which M.P.s, in the special circumstances of the war, were enabled to serve in certain posts abroad while retaining their seats in the House. The House had never been really happy about this procedure, and when the Bill (House of Commons (Temporary Disqualification)) came up for renewal on February 11 this uneasiness showed clearly in the debate, in which plain speaking was sometimes barbed with personalities. The Bill had critics in all parts of the House, and the charges preferred against it were that it had been used to cover appointments never contemplated when its special powers were accorded to the Government, and that some Members who had accepted appointments appeared to have become permanent servants of the Crown.

Most criticism was directed at the appointment of M.P.s to posts such as High Commissioner, which meant their absence from the country for a period of years and the virtual disfranchisement of their constituencies. The more partisan complaint was that which professed fear at the potential recrudescence of "placemen." The criticism expressed was so substantial that the debate was adjourned until the next day so that Mr. Eden might answer it adequately. This he did, in a speech which admitted the need for watchfulness, and he gave an assurance that the Cabinet would examine the whole position before these powers needed renewal at the end of another 12 months; and if they then decided that the Act ought to be continued they would state their case to the House. He deprecated the exaggeration of some of the speeches, and neatly countered the cry of "placemen" with the statement that the 20 M.P.s absent overseas could not at the same time be "placemen." A small minority, mostly members of the Labour Party and Independents, insisted on dividing the House, but the Government got the Bill by 91 votes to 10.

In the subsequent stages a proposal was made to limit the power to six months, and although this was not pressed to a division the Government were left in no doubt that they would face a hostile House if they sought to renew these powers a year hence without the fullest justification. On the motion of Mr. Eden a new clause was inserted requiring that each January during the currency of the Act the Government should issue a return of all members holding certificates and showing where and what office they held and what salary and expenses, if any, they drew.

The war review with which the Prime Minister opened a two-day debate in the Commons on February 22 was especially notable for the emphasis he placed on the air operations, which for the first time he gave pride of place over the war against the U-boat. He also took occasion to state "a few facts not perhaps generally realized" to

illustrate the extent of the part Great Britain was taking in active war operations.

Beginning with the sober reminder that the German Army was still about 300 divisions strong, of high fighting quality, and led by highly trained officers, he estimated that the Anglo-American bombing of Germany—which had had a noteworthy effect on her munitions production—had drawn altogether four-fifths of the German fighter force, and a large proportion of the bombers, against Britain. This had also been of assistance to the Soviet Union.

Observing that the interests of the alliance of nations as a whole might be prejudiced if its other members were left in ignorance of the British share in the great events, and that the Dominions also had a right to know that the Mother Country was playing its part, he recited the following facts about “the British share” :

From January 1, 1943, to the middle of February, 1944, ships of the Royal Navy and R.A.F. aircraft had sunk more than half the U-boats from which we had living prisoners, and 40 per cent of the very large number of others of which there was definite evidence of destruction. British action alone had sunk 19 enemy warships and a large number of E-boats and other auxiliaries and had been predominantly responsible for sinking 316 merchant ships totalling 835,000 tons.

During that period 7,677 officers and men of the Royal Navy and about 4,200 of the Merchant Navy had lost their lives in British ships. Since the beginning of the war about one-fifth of the average number of the British Merchant seamen had been lost at sea ; and the Royal Navy had lost 41,000 officers and men killed, out of 133,000. Since January 1, 1943, ships of the Royal Navy had bombarded the enemies' coasts on 716 occasions. Ninety-five warships had been lost in action or seriously disabled.

In the air, the bombing of Berlin had fallen almost entirely to the British, and we had delivered the main attack on Germany. The R.A.F. had lost 38,300 pilots and aircrews killed, and 10,400 missing, and over 10,000 aircraft—excluding Dominion and Allied squadrons.

The British Army, little more than a police force in 1939, had fought in every part of the world, and history would record how much the contribution of our soldiers had been beyond all proportion to the available manpower of these islands.

Coming to a more general exposition of the air war, Mr. Churchill said the Anglo-American air attack on Germany must be regarded as our chief offensive effort at the present time. The U.S. Bomber Force in Britain was now beginning to surpass our own, and would soon be substantially greater still. After describing the great raids of February 20-21 on German towns by the joint forces, he went on :

“The spring and summer will see a vast increase in the force of the attacks directed upon all military targets in Germany and in German-occupied countries. Long-range bombing from Italy will penetrate

effectively the southern parts of Germany. The whole of this air offensive constitutes the foundation upon which our plans for oversea invasion stand. Scales and degrees of attack will be reached far beyond the dimensions of anything which has yet been employed or, indeed, imagined. The idea that we should fetter or further restrict the use of this prime instrument for shortening the war will not be accepted by the Governments of the Allies. The proper course for German civilians and non-combatants is to quit the centres of munition production and take refuge in the countryside. We intend to make war production in its widest sense impossible in all German cities, towns and factory centres."

Alongside this was constant vigilance and attacks against the enemy preparations on the French shore of new means of attack on this country—pilotless aircraft, or rockets, or both—and the direction of an elaborate scheme of bombing priorities in relation to strategic needs and aims.

"The use of our air power also affects the general war situation by the toll which it takes of the enemy's fighter aircraft both by day and night, but especially the Americans by day, because they have fought very great actions with their formations of Flying Fortresses against enemy fighter aircraft. Already we have seen the German air programme concentrated mainly on fighters, thus indicating how much they have been thrown on to the defensive in the air. Now this new German fighter strength is being remorselessly worn down, both in the air and in the factories, which are the objectives of the continuous attack. Every opportunity is and will be sought by us to force the enemy to expend and exhaust his fighter air strength. Our production of aircraft, fighters and bombers, judged by every possible test, already far exceeds that of the Germans. The Russian production is about equal to ours. The American production alone is double or treble the German production. What the experience of Germany will be when her fighter defence has been almost completely eliminated, and aircraft can go all over the country, by day or night, with nothing to fear but the *flak*, has yet to be seen."

Whereas formerly he had always set in the forefront the war against the U-boat menace, "I deliberately, on this occasion, gave the primacy to the great developments in air power which have been achieved and which are to be expected. This air power was the weapon which both the marauding States selected as their main tool of conquest. This was the sphere in which they were to triumph. This was the method by which the nations were to be subjugated to their rule. I shall not moralize further than to say that there is a strange, stern justice in the long swing of events."

He gave a long account of operations in Italy, which, although they had not taken the course hoped or planned, had drawn 18 of Hitler's divisions to the south. The survey of military operations concluded with a description of the remodelling of the commands "for future operations of the greatest magnitude" for the liberation of Europe, in which Mr. Churchill emphasized the perfect co-operation between British and American commanders, and the building up throughout the Forces of a unity and brotherhood "unique in all the history of alliances."

From this the Prime Minister turned to paint in broad strokes a picture of Europe, suffering so greatly from "the diseases of defeat." The picture he drew is indicated in the following passage :

"There are few societies that can withstand the conditions of subjugation. Indomitable patriots take different paths ; quislings and collaborators of all kinds abound ; guerilla leaders, each with their personal followers, quarrel and fight. There are already in Greece and Yugoslavia factions engaged in civil war one with another, and animated by hatreds

more fierce than those which should be reserved for the common foe. Among all these varied forces the German oppressor develops his intrigues with cynical ruthlessness and merciless cruelty.

"The sanest and the safest course for us to follow is to judge all parties and factions dispassionately by the test of their readiness and ability to fight the Germans and thus lighten the burden of the Allied troops. This is no time for ideological preferences for one side or the other, and certainly we, His Majesty's Government, have not indulged ourselves in this way at all. Thus, in Italy we are working for the present through the Government of the King and Badoglio; in Yugoslavia we give our aid to Marshal Tito; in Greece, in spite of the fact that a British officer was murdered by the guerilla organization called *Elas*, we are doing our best to bring about a reconciliation, or at least a working agreement, between the opposing forces."

There were few new details that he could fill into this general picture. In Italy, he was unconvinced that any other Government could yet be formed which would command the same obedience from the Italian armed forces. A victorious entry into Rome, however, would present many new advantages, and the British and U.S. Governments had provisionally agreed to win the battle for Rome and then take a new view. In Yugoslavia the Partisans had found an outstanding leader in Marshal Tito, whose forces were holding in check 14 out of the 20 German divisions in the Balkans. The British Government intended to back him with all the strength they could, and the Russian and U.S. Governments were also sending missions to him.

He and the Foreign Secretary were working to unravel the complicated position of King Peter, from whom we could not dissociate ourselves, and he asked for the confidence of the House in this task. The saddest case of all was Greece, where it was painful to see the confusion and internecine strife that had broken out, and again the situation was most obscure and changing.

A reference to the value of the triple meeting at Teheran between himself, President Roosevelt and Marshal Stalin, and a full assurance that none of the ground made good in the relations then established had been lost, led to the observations on the future of Poland which are summarized in the opening chapter of this volume. But it may be added here that he paid a high tribute to the Poles, "that heroic race whose national spirit centuries of misfortune cannot quench."

Mr. Churchill's statements on the subject of territorial compensation to Poland and of the non-applicability of the Atlantic Charter to Germany as a right have already been summarized (*loc. cit.*).

These comments on the Atlantic Charter and its relation to a defeated Germany were taken up by Mr. Eden when he wound up the debate the next day.

"What I am about to say does not mean that we wish to try to claim some strained or unilateral interpretation for the Atlantic Charter. All the Prime Minister intended to convey . . . was that Germany would not, as a matter of right, be able to claim to benefit from the Atlantic Charter in such a way as to preclude the victorious Powers from making territorial adjustments at her expense. There are certain parts of the Atlantic

Charter which refer in set terms to victor and vanquished alike. . . . But we cannot admit that Germany can claim, as a matter of right on her part, whatever our obligations, that any part of the Charter applies to her."

Then, on the objective the Government set themselves in foreign policy: "I say, first, that the maintenance of peace, after this conflict is over, depends upon a close and intimate understanding between the nations of the British Commonwealth, the United States of America and the Soviet Union. If we can achieve this understanding, then all our problems, however difficult, can be resolved, and if we cannot achieve it, there is, in my judgment, no hope of a lasting peace. This seems to me to be fundamental. I must not be taken as meaning that on that account we should, any one of the three, have any justification for ignoring the rights of smaller nations. Each people has a claim to its own rights. But it does mean that, unless we three can reach a common understanding and accept common principles for the guidance of our foreign policy, all Powers, great and small alike, are going to suffer."

And a final assurance: "I think many honourable Friends on this side of the House have a suspicion, or an impression, that in some way or other, either at Teheran or at Moscow, we committed ourselves to limit or exclude our interest in certain parts of Europe. I can assure the House that there is no foundation or truth in this at all, absolutely none. We have not agreed to any spheres of influence. We have not been asked to agree to any spheres of influence. We have accepted no barriers. We have not been asked to accept any barriers. We are absolutely free to interest ourselves in the affairs of Europe and the nations of Europe, and no spheres of influence have been agreed to by anybody."

The Services Estimates, introduced in late February and early March, were this year presented against a background of impending operations in Western Europe of the greatest hazard and complexity. This was reflected in the speeches of all three Ministers, and was the prelude to the account which Sir Archibald Sinclair gave when he spoke on the Air Estimates—the first of the series—on February 29.

"The discussion of the Estimates for the three Service Departments," he said, "will proceed this year in the knowledge that we are in all probability approaching the climax of the war. We Service Ministers come to the House to ask for supplies, and for a continuance of that support from Parliament without which we can do nothing, and which has been most generously vouchsafed to us in the most dangerous crises of the war."

His story of air operations during the year preceding is summarized elsewhere (Chapter IV, Section 2). It need only be noted here as illustrating the extent to which, as he said, Parliament had staked on the R.A.F. in this war, that he told the House that, compared with the pre-war Vote of about £17,000,000 a year for Air supplies—about half the then Army Vote—the man-power now allotted to the Ministry of Aircraft Production was larger than the

whole labour force of the Ministry of Supply, which in its turn was greater than the man-power allotted for building naval and merchant ships.

Similarly Mr. A. V. Alexander, presenting the Navy Estimates, on March 7, was able to give an account of a Navy which "stands to-day in a more commanding position than it has held since 1940, strenuously preparing for further and greater responsibilities." His review of the year's operations (*see* Chapter IV, Section 1) afforded much evidence of the reasons which had no doubt led the Prime Minister a fortnight earlier to give such prominence to the air war. Mr. Alexander mentioned three dates in 1943 as standing out like peaks along the road to victory: March 20 onwards, when the trend of merchant shipping losses changed with a suddenness which it was impossible to exaggerate; September 11, when the major units of the Atlantic Fleet anchored under the guns of Malta; and December 26, the destruction of the *Scharnhorst*.

In the first 20 days of the month [of March], he said, losses had leaped up after the winter fall, and among ships in convoy reached a new high level. New dispositions, including the formation of special reinforcement groups to aid threatened convoys, were made possible because of our growing strength, and in the last 10 days of the month merchant sinkings dropped headlong by two-thirds, and had since fluctuated about this lower level.

Sir James Grigg, in his turn (on March 2), spoke of the restrictive effects of events to come on the story he could tell of Army operations. Even of the past he could tell only in part, for it was inextricably mixed up with the present and the future, and he must beware of giving any hint to the enemy of the size, strength and equipment of the forces arrayed against him, or of operational plans.

After recounting the reorganizations of Command, "most of them designed to further the process of inter-Allied and inter-Service collaboration," he said that at home the Army had been reorganized to provide the greatest possible striking force, with the necessary reserves and base organization to support it. In this striking force General Montgomery "finds ready to his hand material finely trained and tempered to make something which shall be even better than the Eighth Army." The Army had passed the peak of its equipment demands, and had reduced its demands on the Ministry of Supply by the equivalent of many tens of thousands of work-people—the bulk of them transferred to the Ministry of Aircraft Production. The main cause for this reduction was that the job of equipping the Forces with their initial establishments and first reserves was pretty well completed,

and production for maintenance only was needed. Sir James included in his survey a quick glance ahead into the prospects of the post-war Army, for we should be forced, he thought, in our own interests and those of the world peace to maintain considerable armed forces; and ended with an expression of supreme confidence in the Force for which he was responsible: "This confidence is complete, and it rests upon the faith that this Army, which came out of great tribulation, is the best we have ever had."

But while his two colleagues were granted their Supply without delay by the discussion of grievances, the Secretary of War ran into serious trouble. A somewhat academic motion on the future of civil aviation, and a call for the systematic development of general and technical education in the Navy, had aroused little controversy. Far different was the question of soldiers' pay with which Sir James Grigg was confronted.

Mr. Kendall, an Independent member, moved an amendment calling for an immediate increase of soldiers' pay and allowances on the ground that they were inadequate to enable the troops and their families to maintain a reasonable standard of living. Members of every party supported him, and after five hours of debate the Government were constrained to promise to examine the claim. Sir James Grigg rejected flatly any idea of raising the pay to the level of Dominion or American rates. To do so would cost about £400,000,000, and would involve inflation on the wildest scale, throwing the whole range of values and wages out of focus. But since so many members had expressed anxiety about particular grievances and hardships, he offered discussion on these questions with representatives of all parties. His blunt rejection of basic increases, however, did nothing to mollify an excited House, in which there were present many members serving in the Forces.

Mr. Eden, as Leader of the House, was appealed to. Like Sir James Grigg, he did not admit that a case had been proved for a flat-rate increase in basic pay, and he rejected the principle that the basic rate should be brought into accord with the Dominion rate, or with industrial pay; but he agreed that the inadequacy of basic pay should not be excluded from the discussions which the Government were ready to hold with representatives of the various parties in private conference. Even after this the House insisted on taking the amendment—which for technical reasons the Government could not accept—to a division. This took place at a late hour, and in the small number voting the Government's majority was reduced to 23—65 to 42 (including tellers).

Although the debate was in form confined to the Army, the issue was one which, of course, affected all the Services. The previous increase in Service pay and allowances, made in September, 1942, had also followed an agitation in the House of Commons, and discussions which resulted in increases totalling £43,000,000 being granted.

When he announced the business before the House on March 9, Mr. Eden said the Government were then sending out invitations for the informal discussions on Service pay and allowances, mentioning that the Government intended that Mr. Attlee, Sir J. Anderson, and himself should meet the members concerned, and hoped to do so during the next week. The invitations were issued to 26 members representing all parties and including

Independents. Before the arrangements for these discussions were completed the Prime Minister was questioned about their scope, and took occasion to say that he did not think any "fundamental change" in basic rates was at all likely. The Serving Members' Committee had discussions on the subject, with particular relation to the possibility of improving allowances for dependants and mitigating special hardship.

The award of war medals and decorations excited public discussion after the institution of the 1939-43 Star and the Africa Star, and was focused in a debate in the House of Commons on March 23, when the qualifying conditions of service, and some consequent anomalies, were discussed. Mr. Churchill gave the House his views on the subject, in a speech which examined many of the difficulties of framing regulations for these awards and was generally disposed towards advising against too much hurry in making binding decisions. The Africa Star, he said, had already been awarded to 1,500,000 officers and men, and the 1939-43 Star to another 1,600,000; with other cases now under consideration the two ribbons might ultimately go to nearly 4,000,000 men. He was most anxious to include in the 1939 ribbon the A.A. batteries, but he could find no way of doing so without opening the door for distribution too widely. The chief interest in his speech lay in the indication that the institution of a Star for service in this country was being "pondered over," and his opinion that at the end of the war there would be a victory medal for all who had served in the uniformed and disciplined services, and also most probably a United Nations or Allied war medal.

Housing and the associated subjects of land acquisition and utilization continued to be topics on which the Government were under almost constant examination. An interesting statement in the House of Lords on February 8 by Lord Portal, Minister of Works, on the progress so far made in preparation for the post-war housing programme, envisaged a two-year "interregnum" period after hostilities, and a 10-year permanent building programme.

Lord Portal said that the Government had decided that in the late spring and early summer of this year arrangements would be made for local authorities to use plant and machinery as it became available from airfield construction for the preparation of housing sites, including roads, sewers and other services. He went into some detail on the possible use of different materials in house building. The Ministry was putting up a number of houses to demonstrate the use of these materials in permanent construction and to ascertain comparative costs. The types he specifically mentioned were brick, foamed slag, light-weight concrete, steel frames with brick panels, and steel.

Experiments were also being made in the conversion of war-time hostels into temporary houses.

He also made the point that it was essential that building labour should not be diverted from the provision of permanent houses to erect temporary houses. The question of real cost, in man-hours and materials, was important.

Because of the self-evident difficulty of getting the necessary labour for

permanent houses during the interregnum period the Government had been working on plans for temporary pre-fabricated houses, and the first prototype of these would soon be ready. It was intended this time to prevent the temporary houses becoming permanent, as had happened after the last war, and to this end the Government had decided that if they were approved the temporary houses should be publicly owned and licensed for a period.

A month later, on March 8, the Minister of Health spoke in the Commons on the Government's housing policy for the first two years after the war, during which the primary task would be to meet the urgent needs of those who had no homes. Simultaneously with the provision of temporary houses the Government proposed to construct new permanent houses, and for this purpose would introduce temporary legislation, extending the scope of the housing subsidies to include dwellings to meet general needs. Local authorities would be enabled to buy in advance land required, with compulsory powers if necessary. The subsidy arrangements were to be discussed with local authorities, who would be invited to proceed on the assumption that, building resources permitting, 100,000 houses were to be completed or under construction in the first year after the end of hostilities and a further 200,000 by the end of the second year.

This announcement led directly to a full debate on housing policy in the following week, when considerable criticism of the Government developed. This was directed not only to the inadequacy of the 300,000 houses programme in Mr. Willink's statement—which he defended as the most that could be expected—but also, and even more, to the Government's delay in declaring its policy on major issues of planning and the failure to give guidance and facilities to local authorities for the purchase of land.

Mr. Willink told the House that it was proposed to introduce legislation intended to enable local authorities forthwith to purchase and plan the whole of the land in reconstruction areas, and to determine the maximum amount payable for land by a local authority. The Minister of Town and Country Planning was engaged in drafting specific proposals on the application of the "1939 price ceiling." The introduction of the Bill would be the occasion for a comprehensive statement of policy on town and country planning. Mr. W. S. Morrison, the Minister concerned, was closely examined on the same point the next day, and assured the House that a Bill would be introduced in the present Session.

A motion complaining of the Government's delay in declaring their policy on land and housing led to a very critical debate in the House of Lords on March 22. The Government were charged by Lord Latham with infirmity of purpose, and by Viscount Samuel with exasperating procrastination which, if stubbornly continued, would have grave political consequences.

Lord Woolton spoke of the momentous decisions on matters affecting the whole issues of the war as being some excuse for delay on what had been a particularly intractable problem ; but admitted that when he had promised a White Paper soon after Christmas and legislation dealing with land during the present Session, he had not appreciated fully the immense amount of time needed to put principles into legislative form. Now he was authorized to say that the Government would make proposals to Parliament after Easter. The Archbishop of York and Viscount Astor were among those who gave warning of growing public discontent at the delays, and the debate was continued for a second day, when Lord Reith, in a striking intervention, declared his support for Lord Woolton—not the Minister of Reconstruction, but the Lord Woolton they had known in happier days ; his embarrassed speech of the day before was another addition to the melancholy chronology of deferment. The debate ended with an extraordinary defence of the Government by Lord Beaverbrook, who recited their legislative programme—present and prospective—all of which he attributed to the guidance and political genius of the Prime Minister.

We have seen at the beginning of this chapter the background against which Mr. Churchill came to the microphone on March 26, to make a broadcast speech which had a two-fold purpose—to prepare the nation for the approaching hour of greatest effort and action, and perhaps new attacks, and to put the Government's post-war policy at home in perspective, and thus to silence those who were constantly prodding the Government to go faster and further.

It was Mr. Churchill's first broadcast since his illness at the end of 1943. He looked back over a year which had brought disappointments as well as successes, but in which the good news had far outweighed the bad, and in which the progress of the United Nations towards their goal had been solid, continual and more rapid.

After recalling the victorious land campaigns in North Africa and Sicily and their consequences elsewhere, he spoke of Britain's deliverance from the mortal U-boat peril, "which deliverance lighteth the year which has ended." Looking back on the 55 months of this hard and obstinate war, he still rated highest among the dangers we had overcome the U-boat attacks on our shipping. In the air the tables had been turned, and those who had sought to destroy us were "reeling and writhing under the prodigious blows of British and American air power." Our American allies, he said, had now definitely overtaken and outnumbered us in the mighty air force they had established here. The combination in true brotherhood of these two air forces—either of which was nearly as large in numbers as, and in power much greater than, the whole German air force, to be aided by another Allied air force in Italy almost as large, would produce results in the coming months of enormous advantage to the cause of the Allies.

It would be quite natural if our Soviet friends and allies did not appreciate the complications and difficulties which attended all sea-crossing

amphibious operations on a large scale. They were the people of the great land spaces. Our tasks were different. But the British and American peoples were filled with genuine admiration for the military triumphs of the Russian armies. The advance of their armies from Stalingrad to the Dniester River, with vanguards reaching out towards the Pruth, a distance of 900 miles, accomplished in a single year, constituted the greatest cause of Hitler's undoing, and had been the main cause of Hitler's approaching downfall in the Balkans.

Turning to the war in the Pacific, waged in vast preponderance by the forces of the United States, Mr. Churchill spoke warmly of the Australian and New Zealand operations against Japan, and the debt—"one that will never be forgotten in any land where the Union Jack is flown"—which the British Empire owed to the United States for the fact that their operations shielded Australia and New Zealand from Japanese aggression and mortal peril when the Mother Country was at full stretch in the struggle against Germany and Italy.

"It is possible," said Mr. Churchill, "that the war in the Pacific may progress more rapidly than was formerly thought possible. The Japanese are showing signs of grave weakness. The attrition of their shipping, especially their oil tankers, and of their air forces, has become not evident but obvious." In Burma plans prepared last August at Quebec were being put into practice. Admiral Mountbatten had infused a spirit of energy and confidence into the heavy forces gathered to recover Burma, and by that means to defend the frontiers of India and reopen the road to China. Individual fighting superiority in the jungle had definitely passed to the British and Indian soldiers as compared with the Japanese. "A year ago I drew attention to the possibility that there would be a prolonged interval between the collapse of Hitler and the downfall of Japan. I still think there will be an interval, but I do not consider it will necessarily be as long an interval as I thought a year ago."

From this survey of the war the Prime Minister returned to home politics and the planning of a better Britain outlined in his broadcast in March last year. Asserting that he had no unsatisfied ambitions "except to beat the enemy, and help you in any way I think right," and that in what he was to say he was not looking for votes or trying to glorify this party or that, Mr. Churchill enumerated proposals relating to education and national health already before Parliament, and the social insurance scheme to be added before the Session was done—all of them major measures which he had thought would be put off till after the war, but already fashioned and proclaimed.

For these, he thought the Government might have expected compliments. Instead, by "a large number of respectable and even eminent people, not at all burdened with responsibility, who have a lot of leisure on their hands," the Government was belaboured and condemned because they were not, in the midst of this deadly struggle, ready at any moment to produce fool-proof solutions for the whole future of the world. The harshest language was used, and the National Government, which had led the nation and the Empire—and a large part of the world—out of mortal danger, were reviled as a set of dawdlers and muddlers, unable to frame a policy or take a decision.

The Government had not yet produced their course of action on housing. In this the first attack must be made on damaged houses which could be reconditioned; they hoped to have broken the back of that this year. There must be an emergency plan; and it was an absolute rule that nothing could or must be done which by weakening or clogging the war

effort prolonged the war. The second attack on the housing problem would be made by what were called the pre-fabricated or emergency houses. He hoped that up to half a million of these might be made, and actual preparations for this were being made during the war on a nation-wide scale. Factories were being assigned, materials were being ear-marked as far as possible. The whole business was to be treated as a military evolution handled by the Government, with private industry harnessed to its service. The swift production of these temporary houses, which he eulogized in a detailed description, was the only way in which the immediate needs of our people could be met in the four or five years following the war. In addition was the programme of permanent rebuilding, by which we should have 200,000 or 300,000 permanent houses built or building by the end of the first two years after the defeat of Germany. The Government had already declared, in 1941, that all land needed for public purposes should be taken at prices based on the values of March 31, 1939. This was a formidable decision of State policy which selected property in land for a special restrictive imposition. The State had the power, which it would on no account surrender, to claim all land needed *bona fide* for war industry or for public purposes, at values fixed before war-time conditions supervened. Nobody need be deterred from planning for the future by the fear that they might not be able to obtain the necessary land. Legislation had been promised and would be presented to Parliament this Session.

There was a short reference to demobilization, and the broadcast ended : "The hour of our greatest effort and action is approaching. We march with valiant allies who count on us as we count on them. The flashing eyes of all our soldiers, sailors and airmen must be fixed upon the enemy on their front. The only homeward road for all of us lies through the arch of victory. In order to deceive and baffle the enemy as well as to exercise the forces, there will be many false alarms, many feints, and many dress rehearsals. We may also ourselves be the object of new forms of attack from the enemy. Britain can take it. She has never flinched or failed."

On March 28 occurred the defeat by one vote of Mr. Churchill's Government. It came about on an amendment to the Education Bill demanding equal pay for men and women teachers. The division was taken after a long debate. The figures were: for, 117, against, 116.

The amendment was moved, during the discussion in Committee of Clause 82, by Mrs. Cazalet Keir, an ardent educationalist. It embodied a principle of much wider application than the teachers to whom it was directed, and had many friends throughout the House. "Equal pay" had been a subject of public discussion for some time, and a motion advocating its application in the Civil Service received the signatures of 159 members. An animated debate derived extra liveliness from a breeze between the Minister, a leading figure in Conservative councils, and some members of the Tory Reform

Committee, a "ginger group," who gave vigorous support to the amendment.

Mr. Butler protested that the amendment was irrelevant to the Bill and administratively unworkable. He explained that it would place him in a false position in relation to the Burnham machinery for settling teachers' salary scales, and to the local authorities who paid them; and he appealed to the House not to force him to put into this Bill a direction which ought first to be decided as a question of national policy. In the face of demands for the amendment now, as an instrument for weighting the scales in favour of the general principle, Mr. Butler repeatedly offered to discuss the general issue with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but steadfastly refused to accept an amendment that he could not conscientiously carry out.

When the excited and rather bewildered House had heard the figures announced, Mr. Greenwood, acting leader of the Labour Party, moved the customary adjournment to give the Government an opportunity to consider the position, but he made it clear that the vote just recorded was not in his view a vote against the Bill nor one of lack of confidence in the Minister. Mr. Eden accepted the motion, and declared that the Government would state their view at the earliest possible moment. The next day Mr. Churchill demanded a vote of confidence, and the complete reversal of the decision. At a very serious time in the progress of the war, he said, there must be no doubt or question of the support which the Government enjoyed from the House.

The issue would be put in the form of a motion for the deletion from the Bill of the amended clause. In the report stage, the Government would propose the reinsertion of the original clause, and would treat its passage throughout as a matter of confidence. If the Government did not secure an adequate majority that would entail the "usual constitutional consequences."

From this unequivocal, and in the opinion of some rather extreme position, he refused to move, asserting in the face of some murmurs on the Labour benches that it was impossible to draw distinctions between votes in domestic matters and those involving confidence in the Government on war issues. After having been defeated, the Government could not go on on the present basis into "the great task which lies immediately ahead of us."

This procedure represented a decision of the War Cabinet. It involved the 117 who had voted against the

Government in personal embarrassment, for they were being asked to reverse their vote on the same issue in order to make plain their general confidence in the Administration. The Tory Reform Committee had no hesitation in deciding that they must now vote for the Government, although some of them felt that less harsh treatment would have been equally effective. The Parliamentary Labour Party Administrative Committee decided almost unanimously to recommend the party to support the confidence motion.

The next day the House demonstrated its confidence in the Administration in decisive fashion, reversing its former decision and removing the offending clause by 425 votes to 23. The Prime Minister was cordially cheered as he rose to leave, and the House soberly resumed its consideration of the Bill, from which no more trouble arose.

Among other topics of Parliamentary discussion during the early part of the year, civil aviation was one that interested both Houses. The Marquess of Londonderry, who was earnestly pursuing this subject in the House of Lords, obtained from Lord Beaverbrook on January 20 news about the progress made in providing new types of aircraft—named the Brabazon and the Tudor—for civil aviation, and an indication of the Government's attitude at the projected international conference. The Government, he said, were ready at any moment to enter an international conference. The first concern would then be to gain general acceptance of broad principles assuring to all countries, except the guilty aggressors, an equitable part in the development of civil aviation. Air bases in the Dominions would be a subject of discussion between Great Britain and the Dominions; as for bases under British control, the Government had no desire to exclude the aircraft of other nations. International agreement on traffic regulations and arrangements was an essential condition of future development. He was authorized by the Prime Minister to state that Britain joined with President Roosevelt in subscribing to the principles of the right of innocent passage of all nations, and the right

to land anywhere for refuelling and non-traffic purposes. He also said that the Government intended to take a full measure of responsibility for development of civil aviation.

Civil flying was discussed by the Commons on March 14 on a motion by Sir A. Beit, who put the issue not as internationalism *versus* unrestricted competition but as the guidance of competition by international regulation. The debate showed a general desire that civil and military aviation should be divorced and control of civil aviation be removed from the Air Ministry. The Secretary of State declined to forecast future administration. In advance of international discussions, he said, a broad measure of agreement had been reached with the Dominions. The Empire would enter the conference as a unit, and he hoped it would not be long before the discussions began. He gave a more detailed account of progress in design than Lord Beaverbrook could do in January, and said that seven new types of civil aircraft had emerged as a result of the work of Lord Brabazon's two committees. One of the new types was revolutionary: jet propulsion would be applied to it, and its speed would far outclass any civil machine now in operation.

The House of Lords had several debates of interest. Of particular note among them was a discussion on February 15 on employment after the war which gave Lord Woolton an opportunity of indicating, as he put it, the lines along which the thoughts of the Government were moving in regard to reconstruction. It may conveniently be interpolated here that a short debate in the Commons a few days earlier on the powers of Lord Woolton as Minister of Reconstruction had elicited from Mr. Attlee the information that Lord Woolton was Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction.

Lord Woolton was confident that an expansionist policy was the right one for this country to pursue, and that the problem of long-term unemployment could be dealt with. He viewed the post-war situation in three phases. The first, immediately after the war, would be one of difficulty and shortage; public demand would exceed supply, and it would be necessary to retain control because raw materials would be in short supply. While being careful to safeguard himself against being taken as advocating economic bilateralism, he expressed the view that some stipulation would be necessary for ensuring exports to countries from which we wanted food supplies. After the transition period would come a period, possibly lasting some years, during which there should be no difficulties about employment, but the risk of negligence if plans were not ready. The aim would be to achieve regularity of employment and avoid booms. The pent-up demand would have to be controlled, lest it produce a rise in prices which would absorb the whole of the war savings. He was sanguine about the possibilities of achieving this since future Governments would be so much better informed than their predecessors about economic trends and the movement of trade, and would be able to see ahead and take early preventive action. Then would come a third, a dangerous period, when all willing spending would be over. Distant as that might be, the Government

were now directing their attention to it, because that would be the time when they would want to encourage local authorities, public utility companies and private undertakings to expend capital. The Government were considering plans to regulate the flow of public works.

The short discussion on February 9, in which the Bishop of Chichester brought to an issue the ethics and expediency of bombing German towns, is referred to elsewhere (see Chapter IV, Section 2). A debate a week later on the preservation of objects of cultural or historical value in the theatres of war became almost inevitably linked with it. The subject was raised by Archbishop Lord Lang, who said that he was thinking of Italy and Rome, which belonged to the world. He explained that his question was to be read in the sense that regard must be had to over-riding military considerations, and he expressed admiration for the way in which the orders to spare Monte Cassino had been observed, but he reminded the House of General Eisenhower's words about "military necessity"—that it would sometimes be more truthful to speak of "military convenience" or even of "personal convenience."

But in the previous debate Lord Lang had deplored as a lamentable moral lapse the mood of exultation which appeared to have been aroused in this country by the heavy air attacks on Germany. Now he was taken vehemently to task by Lord Latham, who denied that the people, especially of London, gloated over the heavy bombing of Germany, and protested that nothing had been said about the little homes in the East End which were more important to their occupants than the glories of Italy which they were never likely to see. In addition to this, Lord Latham expressed resentment at the Bishop of Chichester's assertion that the bombing of Berlin and other German cities by the methods now adopted was not a justifiable act of war. As for historic buildings, he felt he was expressing a universal feeling in the emphatic assertion that he would not be willing to sacrifice his son for any building in the world. The whole debate was one of unusual animation.

The publication on February 18 of the White Paper on a National Health Service was another step in the planning of domestic reconstruction. In it the Government set out in detail their plan for a comprehensive national health service, making open and free to all the best medical and allied services available. Discussion of these proposals occupied two days in each House, and a feature of the debates was the number of doctors who took part. The first day, March 16, when the debates took place concurrently in both Houses, was probably unique in Parliamentary history in this respect.

The Minister of Health, presenting the plan to the House of Commons, commended the scheme as a bold effort to raise and maintain the national health at a higher level. It was not "free" since it would be paid for through taxes, rates and social service contributions. He denied that any regimentation of the medical profession was intended; the principle of free choice of doctor must be maintained, and the measure of control proposed to ensure the better distribution of medical practitioners did not mean any sort of "direction." He also expounded the financial proposals affecting the

voluntary hospitals and the scheme for the rationalization of hospital services under area plans.

The House was well disposed to the scheme, but by no means uncritical, and the debate showed strong differences of opinion between the doctors in the House. This was, however, no more than the profession had displayed on several features of the scheme in the interval since its publication—the salaried service and health centre ideas among them. The Labour Party, through Mr. Greenwood, promised its support in carrying the plan into legislative effect.

In the Upper House Lord Moran moved an amendment to call attention to “the absence of sufficient detail on many important matters, in particular on the consultant service, to enable the House to give a considered judgment.” He described the proposed power of direction given to the Medical Board over entrants to the medical profession as a form of conscription, and a proposal which had aroused the gravest suspicion. He was hopeful about the health centre experiment, but asked for further safeguards in regard to the voluntary hospitals. Lord Dawson of Penn’s criticism was that the scheme tried to embrace too much; the foundations should come first, and the superstructure be built later, in the light of experience. He too called for financial security for the voluntary hospitals, and was fearful of the bureaucratic potentialities of the proposed Central Medical Board.

Lord Horder, while admitting that the Government were moved by good intentions, was unconvinced that essential knowledge and experience had been fully used in framing the scheme. He was deeply concerned about the future of the private practitioner and the voluntary hospitals; the White Paper said they were to remain, but their continued recognition was permitted, not encouraged—an attitude showing lack of appreciation of their intrinsic value.

Lord Woolton sought to assure the medical profession that the Government were most anxious to co-operate with it, and that there was no need for the concern which had been expressed, and that the autonomy of the voluntary hospitals would be preserved. The proposal to set up the Central Medical Council was an effort to secure the best medical opinion to advise Ministers. Lord Moran’s point was answered by the promise that the Government would enter into the fullest discussion on the consultant service, which they were anxious to develop.

The customary financial provision for war and other purposes during this quarter was made in two Votes of Credit passed on January 25—one for £750 millions to meet expenditure till the end of the financial year, and a further Vote for £1,000,000,000 on account of the new financial year beginning on April 1. On this occasion the Vote included the first significant contribution to the work of UNRRA. Sir John Anderson told the House that on the one per cent basis agreed on the British contribution might be computed as £76,000,000, but the Government proposed to take the round sum of £80,000,000 as the British contribution to this work, which he described at length.

CHAPTER IX

FUEL AND FOOD

The coal situation deteriorated during the quarter, ^{Coal} which closed with 60,000 Yorkshire miners on strike and an outbreak of indiscipline among shipyard apprentices on the Tyne and some of the young people directed to the mines—the “Bevin Boys” of the headlines. It was most fortunate that the last two months of the winter were fairly clement. Otherwise the reduction of supplies of household coal for current consumption to 4 cwt. in the south of England and 5 cwt. in the north—both maximum figures—would have caused great suffering. As it was, inequalities of supply were marked and the imminence of large-scale operations on the Continent, of which the Ministry of Fuel and Power reminded consumers, made it more than ever necessary to practise the strictest economy. On January 20 Major Lloyd George announced that the prices of coal and coke in February would be raised by an average of 3s. a ton. He stated that the Coal Charges Account had been running at a loss for a considerable time, and loans made by the Treasury must be repaid. It was also anticipated that production costs would increase further during 1944 owing to decline in productivity per head due to the increasing age of miners, the wastage of experienced workers, and the addition of new entrants into the industry.

On January 22 Lord Porter, chairman of the National Reference Tribunal for the Coalmining Industry, appointed under the Conciliation Scheme for the industry in Great Britain, issued an award dealing with claims put forward by the workers’ side of the Joint National Negotiating Committee.

The effect of the award was to fix minimum wages of £5 a week for miners employed underground and of £4 10s. a week for miners working on the surface. Increases of pay were granted to boys and larger ones to older youths. The award was to apply immediately to trainees at the training centres. The Tribunal recorded their view that there had been a substantial change of circumstances from those prevailing at the time of the agreement between the Mineworkers’ Federation and the Mining

Association in March, 1940; and that this change justified the application of the award made by Lord Greene's board in May, 1943, empowering the National Tribunal to deal with wages generally, provided that this substantial change of circumstances was proved. The Tribunal felt that such a change had taken place in consequence of the increased need of a larger output of coal, the necessity to augment the number of miners employed and the compulsory recruitment of juveniles for work in the mines.

The Tribunal expressed the view that "the granting of the minimum wage is an unsatisfactory method of increasing wages, since it fails to provide an incentive for increased production or more effective work." Nevertheless they held that some increase in the national minimum wage was justified, pending "an overhaul in the general wage structure of the industry." They also dealt with the amount of increase to be granted for week-end and overtime work, fixing it at double rates for week-end work and one-and-one-third rates for overtime.

A delegate conference of the Mineworkers' Federation accepted the award on January 27, but not without criticizing it on the ground that the fixing of the minimum wages without an alteration of piece rates or provision for the adjustment of wages of workmen whose pay had been graded above the minimum had produced a number of anomalies. A number of haulage workers and others employed in the Lancashire and Staffordshire mines had already gone on strike in protest, and on January 28 sixteen collieries were idle. The Mining Association and the Mineworkers' Federation met urgently on February 3 to consider these anomalies and during the next two days most of the Lancashire strikers returned to work. The stoppage had lost more than 80,000 tons of coal, a serious matter in view of the decrease in output recorded during the four weeks ending on January 22. Owners' and miners' delegates had meanwhile decided to refer the anomalies to the district associations "for consideration and settlement."

Worse trouble was to come. On February 11 the Ministry of Fuel and Power issued the following statement:

The Government has agreed that the cost of giving effect to the terms of the recent award by the National Reference Tribunal for the Coalmining Industry . . . shall be a charge on the Coal Charges Account.

In the course of the findings of the Tribunal it is stated: "The further claim for an increase in the piece rates to take account of the new minimum rates is not acceded to. It is not consistent with the granting of what is merely a minimum wage, and to give it might lead to a request for an increase in all actual wage rates whether of day or piece workers. The

consideration of so great an alteration must await the general overhaul of the wages structure which is long overdue."

The Government, is, therefore, not prepared to provide the cost of any increase in piece rates, but will meet the cost that may be the result of implementing the award, e.g. the expense incurred when the workman's contract involves payment to another workman.

The Ministry of Fuel and Power has been authorized to discuss with the two sides of the industry a general overhaul of the wage structure and to give all possible assistance to facilitate discussions and negotiations. The Government is of opinion that such overhaul should take place immediately.

The Labour Correspondent of *The Times*¹ gave the following explanation of the Government's warning :

"Seeing the complications of the award and the dissatisfaction caused by the telescoping of several wage levels into the minimum, the mine-owners and the miners have opened negotiations in the districts to remove the anomalies and effect adjustments. The Government withhold sanction from the impending agreements and, standing by the award of the tribunal, call for a general overhaul of the wage structure of the industry before any further changes are made. It is the Government's view that the overhaul should take place at once. Meanwhile the feeling of the miners in the coalfields has to be reckoned with, and the refusal of advances, which, justifiably or not, the industry had come to regard as assured, may have disquieting consequences."

Coalmining notoriously has most difficult and complicated wage arrangements which differ from coalfield to coalfield and may vary within the same coalfield. The National Tribunal did not fix a time for the introduction of the higher minimum wage rates, but it could not have contemplated a long interval which would have exacerbated the existing unrest and a general overhaul of the wage structure was bound to be a lengthy undertaking. Owners and miners had therefore got together and agreed to "iron out" the anomalies in order to ensure that the award would take effect with a minimum of delay. But to defray the cost of new and higher wage scales owners and miners would have to appeal to the Government for a subsidy or for permission to inflict a fresh burden on the consumer. The view was freely expressed that the Government after issuing their warning should take the lead in new discussions on the wage structure of the coal industry.

On February 16 the Minister of Fuel had conferences with representatives of the Mineworkers' Federation and of the Mining Association at which there was much plain

¹ *Loc. cit.* February 12.

speaking. It was understood that Major Lloyd George put before the two sides the Government's proposal of an immediate overhaul of the wages structure of the industry by a joint committee. The mine-owners' representatives undertook to co-operate, the miners' representatives would consider the proposal.

An official announcement gave the main heads of the Minister's statements to the leaders of the miners and to the mine-owners. He pointed out that the setting up of the national reference machinery had been welcomed by all, and that it had been agreed that the national and district associations should do their utmost to ensure that the terms of awards should be observed by the industry.

The recent award had created a situation in which the existing relationships between the wages of certain classes of miners had been altered. That consequence of the award had been foreseen by the Tribunal, which had rejected the proposal that day-workers' and piece-workers' wages should be amended upwards to preserve the existing relationships. They had, however, recommended the overhaul of the wage structure of the industry.

When he heard that negotiations had opened between the owners and miners he had warned the Mining Association that the Government could in no way be committed to such discussions. Later when the course taken by these negotiations became known to him, it was clear that in certain districts the effect would be to circumvent the terms of the award, and to double, and possibly treble, the total increase in the wages bill resulting from it. To have accepted the agreements reached in the district negotiations would have exposed the Government to the charge of irremediably harming the National Reference Tribunal and, indeed, the principle of the sanctity of awards. Moreover the Government felt that they could not ask the consumer to shoulder a further heavy financial burden.

It had long been clear that the majority of the difficulties in the industry were caused by wage questions. For that reason he had asked the Mine-workers' Federation in December to prepare a scheme for the overhaul of the wage structure. The National Tribunal's award had made this task urgent, and he therefore laid the Government's proposal (q.v. *supra*) before both sides of the industry.

The miners' leaders accepted the Government's veto with a strong protest. Strikes began in Durham, where for some weeks workers in many pits had reduced production by "ca' canny" methods and fallen back on the minimum wage rates, as a protest against the National Tribunal's decision not to raise piece rates. The movement was strongest, wrote the Labour Correspondent of *The Times*,¹

"at the large well-equipped pit at Easington, where the men have no local grievances at all. They have the single aim of defeating the tribunal's

¹ *The Times*, March 7.

award in respect of the piece workers and in doing so are depriving the country of a large quantity of much-needed fuel."

The Ministry of Fuel and Power issued a statement on March 6 from which it transpired that after the National Reference Tribunal's award had added £5,000,000 to the wages of the industry, piece-rate workers complained that the gap between their earnings and the day wage workers had been reduced. They had adopted a ca' canny policy in some pits, and at Easington the weekly output had sunk from 15,000 tons to 6,500 tons since January 29. This policy had been adopted although the Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain had accepted the Porter award and it was against the advice of the Durham Miners' Association and of their leaders in the county. The authorities had therefore given 374 men employed at Easington 14 days' notice to determine their employment in the colliery and they would be directed by the Ministry of Labour and National Service to other Durham collieries. This "is only the first stage . . ." the Ministry added.

The situation in Durham began to improve after a few days, but in South Wales the action of the Ministry of Fuel in banning the negotiations in the coalfield and still more in vetoing the payment of customary allowances for working in wet or dusty places caused a strike which spread like wildfire throughout the coalfield, where at least 80,000 men had ceased work by March 9 in spite of the appeals of their leaders. The publication on that day by the Ministry of Fuel and Power of a statement concerning its new wage proposals which Major Lloyd George had laid before representatives of the mine-owners and the miners did not immediately improve the situation, and it was not until March 12 that the strikers began seriously to consider returning to work. On the previous night a conference of 250 delegates from the lodges, union leaders, miners' agents and miners' M.P.s had unanimously urged an immediate return to work. They said :

"We are unitedly of this opinion because this stoppage fails to serve the best interests of the miners and places in jeopardy the lives of our colleagues on the fighting fronts. Some of the grievances which have precipitated this stoppage have already been remedied. Other grievances will be considered with the Government immediately upon a resumption of work. The Government has already made proposals to stabilize wages until June, 1948, except for fluctuations in the cost of living.

Piece-workers are to be assured of increases in wages. Craftsmen and skilled workmen's wages are still open for examination. This stoppage is delaying the settlement of these grievances.

We ask you to return to work in order to enable your organization to do its job and restore that public esteem which is vitally needed to enable the miners to obtain a just deal."

The strikers took time to make up their minds, but by March 15 over 65,000 were back at work. But in spite of the news published on March 25 that the discussions between the Minister of Fuel and Power and the miners' and mine-owners' representatives on the new national wages agreement had resulted in an agreement subject to approval of its terms by the Mineworkers' Federation and the Mining Association,¹ a strike which had broken out in the Yorkshire coalfield gathered strength. On March 30 over 70,000 men were idle.²

The news, published on March 29, that the executive council of the South Wales Miners' Federation had recommended the delegates' conference to reject the Government's four-year plan in advance was disheartening and did not make public opinion any more favourable to the miners' cause. This decision and the extension of the strike in Yorkshire counterbalanced the improvement recorded in Durham, where the regional controller had withdrawn the notice to cease work which had been served on the miners in Easington Colliery.³

On March 28 a strike of shipyard and engineering apprentices broke out on Tyneside. Many young men at work in yards and works on the river passed resolutions not to return to work until Mr. Bevin had undertaken that a South Shields youth, employed on an electrical job, should not be sent to the mines. Five thousand apprentices came out, and next day 10,000 struck on Clydeside and 1,000 in Huddersfield. There was evidence that a small but active body of Left-wing extremists had

¹ The agreement included the Government's formula for the payment of piece-rate workers, provisions for a corresponding improvement of craftsmen's wages, and stabilization of these rates as well as the basic rate for a period of four years.

² The coalowners of South and West Yorkshire had made deductions of 3s. 6d. a week from the wages of miners who were receiving home coal and were on the Porter minimum wage of £5 weekly. They agreed on March 25 to reduce the deduction to 2s. on the understanding that all strikers should resume work at once. Although Mr. J. A. Hall, president of the Yorkshire Mineworkers' Association, said that this figure was, in his opinion, very reasonable, a large number of miners rejected the concession, and the strike spread.

³ He said that he had taken this decision in consequence of the marked improvement in output since the men had decided by ballot to cease 'canny' methods.

been engaged in fomenting the strike and on the night of March 29 Mr. Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service, issued the following statement which was also a warning to the strikers :

"A body known as the Tyne Apprentices' Guild, which claims to represent youths in engineering and shipbuilding on the Tyne, has demanded the passing of legislation to guarantee the unconditional exemption of all apprentices from liability to direction into coal-mining under the mining ballot scheme. On March 7 the guild stated that failing the passage of such legislation within three weeks Tyneside apprentices would withhold their labour.

A stoppage of work has now taken place. This is not an industrial dispute. It has been fomented by a few irresponsible mischief-makers and is flatly contrary to the advice of the trade unions. It is, in short, an attempt to use the strike weapon to coerce the Government at a critical moment of the war. No Government worthy of the name can tolerate action of this kind.

All youths must at this time serve their country where their services are most needed, and it is only the Government who are in a position to say whether they can do this best in civilian employment or in the armed forces. The only right course for those who have left their employment is to resume work at once."

On March 31 it was announced that disputes in the coalfields had caused a loss of 750,000 tons of output in the four weeks ending March 18.

There were few important changes in food rationing in Food Great Britain during the quarter and controlled prices remained stable. On February 2 the Milk Marketing Board announced the prices that would be paid to producers of *milk* until March 31, 1945. Figures published by the Board showed that milk production during the winter had been highly satisfactory. It was announced on March 7 that the *cheese* ration would be reduced from 3 oz. to 2 oz.¹ a week on April 2, but that shortly after the reduction the weekly allowance of milk would be increased from 2 pints to 2½ pints. The monthly allocation of points would then be increased from 20 to 24, and it was hoped that more *tinned meat* and *tinned fish* would be available.

An official of the Ministry of Food was quoted by the Food Correspondent of *The Times* (*loc. cit.*, March 15) as saying that according to present indications the *tea* ration was not likely to be either increased or reduced during the current year, and the Ministry was fairly confident of being

¹ This did not apply to the miners, agricultural workers and others who received a cheese ration of 12 oz. per week.

able to maintain the *sugar* ration this year and probably in 1945, although an increase was improbable.

On March 21 the Ministry announced the coming transfer of imported tinned *marmalade* from the preserves to the points section of the ration book. It was also announced that since in some districts the quantity of dried *eggs* taken up by the public had been less than the entitlement the Ministry had sanctioned retailers having supplies available to sell dried *eggs* without restriction as to quantity from March 26 to April 1.

On March 4 the retail price of certain green *vegetables*, e.g. drumhead *cabbages*, *savoys*, *broccoli* and *cauliflower* would be increased until April 2. The maximum retail price of *swedes* and *turnips* during the same period was also raised. Retail prices of *tomatoes* during the season of 1944 were fixed at the same time. They varied from 1s. 6d. a lb. at the beginning and end of the season to 1s. od. from September 18 to October 15, with 1s. 3d. as the fixed price in the intermediate months before and after the height of the season.

There was no change in the price of *bread*. On March 3 Mr. C. A. Coombe, Director of Cereal Products, Ministry of Food, made an interesting statement about the composition of the nation's bread. During 1943, he said,

In addition to an increase in supplies of *wheat*, the larger crops of *barley*, *rye* and *oats* had made a further saving in shipping. In some parts as much as 10 per cent of barley, rye and oatmeal were used in making flour. This quantity had gradually been reduced, until it was now only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; the barley and oats would be used no longer, leaving only an admixture of a small percentage of rye.

Market prices for wheat and rye were fixed late in February by the Ministry of Food and the Agricultural Departments. For millable wheat the fixed price on a sale by a grower ex-farm was to begin at 13s. per cwt. for August and September, 1944, and would rise by monthly increments to 15s. 4d. in June-July, 1945. Potentially millable wheat would be subject to a deduction according to cost of conditioning which should not exceed 2s. 6d. a cwt. Non-millable wheat would rise in steps from 10s. 6d. to 12s. 8d. a cwt. The price fixed for rye was 13s. a cwt., millable, and 11s. a cwt. non-millable. The deduction for potentially millable rye must not exceed 2s. The maximum price of barley fit for human consumption was fixed at 25s. a cwt. The minimum price of millable barley was fixed at 22s. 8d. and of potentially millable barley at 20s., while the maximum price of barley suitable for feeding to livestock was not to exceed 14s. 6d.

The allowance of *fish* to catering establishments was increased from March 5 to April 2. The Committee on the Herring Industry recommended the immediate reconstitution of the Herring Fishery Board in a report published on February 29 (Cmd. 6,503. Stationery Office, 9d.).

CHAPTER X

MONEY

The following are the recorded totals of the sums invested and subscribed during the quarter : (a) in War Bonds, 1952-54, Savings Bonds, 1960-70, Series "C," and Loans free of interest, and (b) in National Savings Certificates, Defence Bonds, and deposits in the Post Office and Trustee Savings Banks :

| <i>Week Ending</i> | | (a) | (b) |
|--------------------|---------|-------------|-------------|
| January | 4 .. | £16,563,789 | £11,134,881 |
| " | 11 . | £17,528,856 | £17,871,978 |
| " | 18 | £15,133,359 | £18,124,899 |
| " | 25 | £8,126,080 | £14,881,157 |
| February | 1 | £13,218,185 | £14,305,817 |
| " | 8 | £12,692,630 | £16,071,815 |
| " | 15 ... | £10,649,210 | £15,028,905 |
| " | 22 . | £7,647,047 | £13,572,278 |
| " | 29 .. | £9,886,905 | £11,903,142 |
| March | 7 .. | £11,187,296 | £14,086,791 |
| " | 14 ... | £12,876,246 | £15,053,507 |
| " | 21 | £20,135,783 | £12,670,874 |
| " | 28 . | £75,327,107 | £12,635,982 |

The total of "large savings" for the week ending March 28 reflected the inclusion of the first three days of the "Salute the Soldier" campaign. The receipts of these three days were not included in the "small savings" return for the same week owing to the time lag necessary for the recording of sales and the like. The "target" for the campaign, which opened with the Greater London week on March 25 was bigger and more ambitious than in any previous savings campaign. Greater London gave a lead with £165,000,000, and the final total announced on April 5 was £166,629,273. Every savings committee in the area passed its target. Much was done to make the occasion as stately and colourful as possible. General

Montgomery received a great welcome at the Mansion House luncheon given by the Lord Mayor to inaugurate the campaign on March 24. Next day Sir Alan Brooke, C.I.G.S., opened the proceedings, and on March 27 the King with the Queen and Princess Elizabeth at his side took the salute as thousands of service men and women marched past Buckingham Palace. On March 30 which was United States Forces Day some 3,000 men and women of the United States Army and Women's Auxiliary Corps marched to Trafalgar Square, loudly cheered by Londoners. Lieut.-General J. C. H. Lee, Deputy European Theatre Commander, U.S. Army, took the salute and read the troops a message from General Eisenhower.

The promised extension of the "Pay-as-You-Earn" principle of tax collection to all income-tax payers assessed under Schedule E under the Income Tax (Offices and Employments) Bill was well received. It was known before the quarter was out that it would come into force on April 6, and most of the necessary forms, leaflets, cards, tax tables, etc. had been distributed to employers before the end of March. The interest aroused by the problems presented by P.A.Y.E., as the method was styled by the Press, was shown by the crowd which thronged the board-room of the London Chamber of Commerce on February 16 to hear Mr. S. P. Chambers, one of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, explain and solve them.

Mr. Chambers said that the fundamental principle of the pay-as-you-earn method was that the tax payable for any year was to be measured by the income of that year, and was to be deducted from the pay of that year. Deduction would as far as possible keep step with the pay. When the pay was greater the deductions would be greater, when it was smaller they would be smaller, so that at any time the taxpayer was up to date with his payments. He then explained the meaning of the forms, tax cards and similar papers which would be issued. An official booklet entitled "Pay As You Earn" was issued to wage-earners early in March, and gave them a clear and simple explanation of the system.

CHAPTER XI

THE DOMINIONS

The request of the United States Government that Eire should break off relations with the Axis Powers, Mr. de Valera's refusal and British, Dominion and American reactions thereto have been dealt with in the First Chapter of this volume. In Eire Mr. de Valera's attitude was generally supported by public opinion. Indeed the American request and the impression that the country was approaching a period of extreme isolation and of international difficulties even suggested to some minds that the crisis could best be met by the formation of an all-party Government. This opinion was expressed in the Dail by Sir John Esmonde, the Fine Gael deputy for County Wexford, on March 15, but Mr. de Valera did not respond to the hint.

On January 18 Mr. W. T. Cosgrave, leader of Fine Gael, and former President of the Executive Council, announced that he had decided to retire from public life, for reasons of health. He had done remarkable work for his country during the ten years in which he had held this high office and the structure which he fashioned has stood the test of twelve years of Mr. de Valera's Government. The party elected General Richard Mulcahy as his successor. In his first address to his party the new president said that their foreign policy would be the framework within which their internal policy would be carried on and might have important effects on their economic well-being.

He continued :

"We stand unequivocally for membership of the British Commonwealth. We believe that the solution of the problem of partition must be brought about by agreement between Irishmen and closer co-operation and consultation between ourselves and all classes in the north including the Northern Government." General Mulcahy returned to the theme of Irish relations with the Commonwealth on February 5 when he again urged closer co-operation. He refused to believe that Ireland would be excluded

from Commonwealth post-war conferences. That would be a denial of the essential spirit of the Commonwealth. It might have been difficult for many in their distress to understand Irish neutrality, but it had been recognized and respected honourably, and nobody challenged the constitutional and moral right of Eire to remain neutral.¹

On March 25 Mr. de Valera, speaking at Galway, said that for her safety Eire needed to sow one and a half acres of wheat for every acre sown last year. Now less than ever could they look for food from abroad. If they had none they would have to beg for it and people who went begging were sometimes answered as beggars.

Northern
Ireland

Sir Basil Brooke, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, visited London in January and was understood to have discussed post-war reconstruction policy with Lord Woolton in the course of a number of conversations with Ministers and Parliamentarians. On February 17 it was announced that the Rev. Professor Robert Corkey, who had been appointed Minister of Education in May, 1943, had resigned. In a statement to the Press he said that he had given expression to his admiration for the proposals for educational reform in England, including plans for securing a Christian education for children in all types of schools, including "direct grant schools." His views on this matter had been strongly opposed. .

The Prime Minister told the North of Ireland House of Commons on February 22 that he had asked the Minister to resign because he was "not able to give sufficient attention to his Ministry." He denied that there had been differences between Professor Corkey and himself on the subject of religious education. In the Ulster Senate Professor Corkey affirmed the contrary. He added that until February 11 no complaint had reached him regarding his relationship with the Ministry. A "no confidence" motion arising out of his resignation was withdrawn after some discussion in Parliament on March 6. On March 17 it was announced that Mrs. Dehra Parker, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education, had resigned, as Mr. Beattie, leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party had suggested when moving the "no confidence" motion. On March 21 Lieut.-Colonel S. Hall-Thompson was appointed Minister of Education. Senator Sir Roland Nugent was appointed Minister without portfolio (unpaid) and became leader of the Senate.

¹ It remained difficult to understand Irish neutrality unless it were explained by purely prudential motives. Unfortunately most Irishmen who defended it (many did not) insisted on explaining that it was due to high moral considerations and not to anything so derogatory to Irish prestige—if I may use the favourite adjective of one of the characters in *The Plough and the Stars*—as fear of being bombed, or soreness over partition.

Engineers in the aircraft industry in the Six Counties went on strike on March 15. In spite of an anxious message from Sir Stafford Cripps and appeals from Ministers and Trade Union leaders, the strike spread to the shipyards and nearly 20,000 men had ceased work by March 31.

On January 24 Lord Halifax, who was paying a visit Canada to the Dominion, made an interesting speech at a dinner celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the Toronto Board of Trade. It dealt with the relations between the members of the British Commonwealth from an individual and critical standpoint. He began by pointing out that during the whole period between the Durham Report and the Statute of Westminster the trend of development in the Dominions had been towards equality of status, but the Statute had left unsolved more obstinate problems arising in the fields of foreign policy and defence.

"It is an immeasurable gain if on vital issues we can achieve a common foreign policy, expressed not by a single voice but by the unison of many. So, too, in the field of defence, while there must be individual responsibility there must also be unity of policy." On September 3, 1939, the Dominions were faced with a dilemma; either they must conform to a policy which they had only a partial share in framing, or else they must stand aside and see the unity of the Commonwealth broken, "perhaps fatally and forever."

It did not take them long to choose, and with one exception they chose war. But "the dilemma was there," and having occurred twice in 25 years it might occur again. "That is the point at which equality of function lags behind equality of status." Two roads, broadly speaking, were open to the Dominions. One was isolation, an old policy which a shrinking world made it more difficult to pursue. There was a stronger and more compelling argument towards choosing the second road, by which the Dominions, instead of drawing apart, might fortify the partnership of the British Commonwealth.

The British Empire had proved many times a powerful and beneficent world force, and it might be desirable to maintain and extend the war-time procedure of joint planning and consultation. If the Statute of Westminster was in a sense a declaration of independence, it was also a declaration of interdependence, a recognition that in the world of the twentieth century no country could live by itself and for itself alone.

There were now three Great Powers, the United States, Russia and China, great in numbers, areas and natural resources. Side by side with them was the United Kingdom, with a population of less than 50,000,000, with territory that could be easily contained in one of the larger states of the American Union, and with natural resources scarcely comparable with those of her companions. It was nevertheless likely that Western Europe would look to Great Britain for leadership and guidance. If in the future Britain was to play her part without assuming burdens greater than she could shoulder she must have with her in peace the same strength that had

sustained her in war, and not Britain only, but the British Commonwealth and Empire must be the fourth Power in the group upon which the peace of the world would depend. The unity of the Commonwealth was no mere British interest. Far from being an obstacle, it was a condition necessary to the working partnership with the United States, Russia and China. We must look to that partnership if we are to play our rightful part in the preservation of peace. "We can only play it as a Commonwealth, united, vital and coherent."

Canadian opinion on Lord Halifax's suggestion differed widely. The Conservatives were inclined to support his thesis. The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation followed its leader, Mr. M. J. Coldwell, in preferring an international organization for maintaining world peace to what he described as a consolidated Commonwealth which would work on the lines of power politics with the surviving Great Powers. The Prime Minister, Mr. King, speaking in the Dominion House of Commons on January 31, said that he had been informed that Lord Halifax "was not making any political pronouncement on behalf of the British Government." The speech had not been understood quite as Lord Halifax would have wished it to be understood.

"All Lord Halifax wanted was to bring before the public certain thoughts which it would be well for us all to consider, but I do think it was unfortunate that the speech should have been made at this particular time."

No less than seven Imperial conferences had decided against a binding Empire Council. All had agreed that foreign policy should be left to the various Empire Parliaments.

That would be the position of the Canadian Government in any Empire Conference that might be held this year. Such conferences would be for consultation and co-operation but not for the formulation or preparation of policies.

Referring to the speeches of Lord Halifax and General Smuts, he said that both agreed that Great Britain alone would be outweighed by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. in resources and man-power and that it was therefore necessary for the United Kingdom to have the constant support of other countries to maintain the balance. No doubt the peace of the world would depend on there being on the side of peace a large superiority of power. But he questioned whether the best way of attaining this was to seek a balance of strength between the three or four leading Powers. What they must strive for was co-operation between these Powers and other like-minded countries. Behind the conception expressed by Lord Halifax and General Smuts lurked the idea of inevitable rivalry between the Great Powers. He maintained that, apart from all questions as to how the com-

mon policy suggested by Lord Halifax was to be framed and executed by the Commonwealth Governments, such a conception ran counter to the establishment of effective world security and was therefore opposed to the true interests of the Commonwealth. "I am 100 per cent," he said, "for close consultation, for close co-operation and for as effective co-ordination as possible on Empire matters. Let us by all means unite, but do not let us separate ourselves as an entity from similar co-operation with other countries."

On the same occasion Mr. King said that the Canadian Government did not intend to be interrupted by a general election in war-time. He desired to remain Prime Minister until victory had been won. The men oversea did not want an election until they could be welcomed home victors. This statement and the Prime Minister's declarations on Canadian foreign policy after the war unquestionably relaxed the political tension which had become noticeable and met with general public approval. At the same time it was believed that the incompatibilities between Mr. King's views and those expressed by Lord Halifax on future Commonwealth relations might be modified when the Dominion Prime Ministers met in London; and it was freely admitted that the problems raised by Lord Halifax would have to be faced and solved sooner or later.

Parliament had opened on January 27 when the Governor-General stated in his Speech from the Throne that provision had been made for the establishment of three new Government Departments. They were :

A Department of Veterans' Affairs to take charge of the rehabilitation and re-establishment of the troops and the administration of pensions and allowances; a Department of Reconstruction to deal with development and reconstruction; and a Department of Social Welfare to organize and help to administer social insurance and health measures. Lord Athlone said that the coming months would witness decisive battles demanding a supreme effort on the part of the United Nations. Until the German Army and the Japanese Navy had been defeated the Allied nations could not regard victory as assured. The winning of the war remained the first objective of all. The Government believed that the time had come when the nations now united to win the war should seek unitedly to ensure an enduring peace, and Parliament would be invited to approve of Canada's taking part in the establishment of such an "international organization." In the home field measures to establish a national minimum of social security and welfare would be advanced as soon as possible. Suitable peace-time uses for war plants were being sought and plans were being made for their speedy conversion.

On December 27 Colonel Ralston, Minister of Defence, had announced that the Government on medical advice had decided "with great regret" to grant Lieut.-General A. G. McNaughton, Commander of the First Canadian Army, several months' leave of absence, and to relieve him at his request of his command. The decision was greatly regretted in this country which owed him much for his admirable training of the Canadian troops in Britain, and not least for the manner in which he had brought them through the years of waiting.

Lieut.-General K. Stuart was appointed Acting Commander of the First Canadian Army. General McNaughton returned to Canada early in February. Parliamentary questions were asked about his resignation on which subject Mr. King had a three-hour confidential conference with the Opposition leaders on February 15. It was thought that the Government considered the General's health not robust enough for the strain of command in the field.

Other very important statements were made by Ministers during the quarter. On February 11 Mr. J. L. Ilsley, Minister of Finance, indicated that Canada expected to spend 10,000,000 dollars daily for war purposes during the fiscal year beginning on April 1. He asked the House of Commons to provide \$3,650,000,000 for war expenditure during that period and said that that sum fell short by \$240,000,000 of the current year's requirements.

On February 29 Mr. C. G. Power, the Minister of National Defence for Air, when presenting the Air Estimates, spoke of the astonishing expansion of the Dominion Air Force.

Starting with a strength of 4,000 men, the R.C.A.F. had raised a force exceeding 200,000. Of the 86,000 airmen trained in Canada 48,000 were Canadians. Canadians formed between 22 per cent and 25 per cent of all the air crews in the Mediterranean and European theatres, where they were under British tactical command, and the proportion was expected to rise to about one-third. Canadian losses included 7,958 dead and presumed dead, and 3,384 missing, prisoners of war, and interned.

On the same day Mr. C. D. Howe, Minister of Munitions and Supplies, announced in the House of Commons that the Canadian Government had informed the Government of the United States that they would not expect payment for the construction of the permanent facilities

and improvements carried out on the north-west staging route from Edmonton through Fort Nelson and White Horse to the Alaskan boundary, in connexion with American war requirements. The U.S. would also be reimbursed for its expenditure on permanent works on the air routes in the area.

On March 9 the Minister of Defence for Naval Services, when presenting the naval estimates, totalling \$410,000,000, gave the House interesting and striking information of the expansion and services of the Dominion Navy.

Naval personnel now numbered 80,000, and nearly 50,000 ships had come under the protection of the Canadian Navy during the war. The main work of the Navy had been the escort of convoys in the Atlantic North, but Canadian warships were also operating in the Pacific, the Mediterranean, and in the Arctic and Indian Oceans. Canadian shipyards, Mr. Macdonald told the House, had built about 100 warships for the Royal Navy, and as many were on order. Canada had also built ships for the United States. All ships built in Canada were 95 per cent Canadian products. The Navy now numbered 230 fighting ships and more than 450 auxiliary vessels.

In the coming summer the Canadian Navy would no longer be the "small ship navy" that it had been. Two modern cruisers had been acquired from the Admiralty and it was proposed to man two aircraft carriers with Canadian seamen.

On March 16 Mr. King told Parliament that mutual aid agreements had been concluded with Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and Australia, and similar agreements were being negotiated with China and the French Committee. These agreements were to some extent parallel to lend-lease agreements concluded by the U.S. Government with other countries.

Each agreement, Mr. King explained, contained a pledge of reciprocal aid to Canada and a mutual undertaking to pursue international economic policies designed to attain the economic objectives defined in the Atlantic Charter. The "Mutual Aid Master Agreement" signed on February 11 with Great Britain, laid down conditions under which Canada would deliver to the United Kingdom aircraft, lorries and other war supplies including foodstuffs. During 1943-44 Canada had appropriated \$1,000,000,000 to finance such supplies to the United Nations. The agreement with Australia had been signed on March 9.

The preamble to the "Mutual Aid Act" declared that it was expedient that the conditions on which Canadian supplies were made available to other countries should not be such as to burden post-war commerce or lead to the imposition of trade restrictions "or otherwise prejudice a long, just and lasting peace." The Government had taken the position that an accumulation of large war debts was contrary to the public interest.

Civil aviation both domestic and international greatly interested the Canadian Government and people. On March 17 Mr. Howe gave Parliament a statement of the Government's views.

Steps would be taken to require the railway companies to divest themselves of ownership in air lines so that within a year from the end of the war air transport would be entirely dissociated from surface transport. A new federal board would be instituted, called the Air Transport Board. By the end of the war Canada would have about 200 modern airfields, including a chain from coast to coast. In the field of international aviation the geographical situation of Canada entitled her to an important place. Referring to an announcement that the Civil Aeronautics Board in the U.S.A. was considering hearing applications for new air services from the U.S.A. to Canada, Mr. Howe gently pointed out that no new services could be initiated without the consent of both Governments and that applications for air lines from another country must be made through diplomatic channels.

**New
Zealand**

The conference on Pacific security and kindred matters between the Australian and New Zealand Governments is chronicled in the Australian section of this chapter. On returning from Canberra to Wellington, Mr. Fraser, the Prime Minister, stated that the agreement concluded between the two Governments would be submitted immediately to the Cabinet for ratification, and that when Parliament met it would be tabled for full discussion.

The new Parliament met on February 23 when the Governor-General, Sir Cyril Newall, spoke of the remarkable services of the 2nd and 3rd New Zealand Divisions overseas, the expansion of the New Zealand Air Force for the Pacific offensive and the success of the New Zealand Navy in operations against the Japanese in the South-West Pacific region.

The mobilization of total resources, men and materials, remained the Government's principal aim. After four and a half years of war, nevertheless, they had reached a stage where the resources of man-power available for military service must be balanced with those needed for other essential purposes. The demobilization of the home-defence forces had released men for industry and had made additional men available for the expeditionary forces. The Government were concentrating their attention on the problem of augmenting labour for food production.

The Governor-General also announced that the Prime Minister would soon attend the Imperial Conference in London.

When the House of Representatives debated the Canberra Pact on March 30 the Prime Minister spoke of

international aviation and its control. Australia and New Zealand, he said,

supported the control and operation of international air trunk routes by "an international authority which would own the aircraft and equipment, or alternatively an Imperial system of air trunk routes owned and operated by the British and Dominion Governments. Before the war New Zealand had agreed to the Pan-American line coming to New Zealand bases, and it was felt that there was room for a British Commonwealth line to operate parallelly, but not to the exclusion of the other line in the Pacific. There might even be lines in which all the English-speaking nations, including the U.S.A., might combine.

Speaking of the Canberra Pact generally, Mr. Fraser said that Australia and New Zealand had agreed to the establishment of a defence zone within the general system of world security. They acknowledged their responsibility and offered to share or to carry out the policing of those Pacific areas which concerned them. The co-operation of the English-speaking Powers in the Pacific was on a colossal scale. Nothing could be more untrue or more stupid than to say that the agreement was directed against the United States.¹

The agreement with New Zealand was signed at **Australia** Canberra on January 20. The conference between the two Governments had opened on January 17. The Australian representatives were :

Mr. Curtin (the Prime Minister), Dr. Evatt, Mr. Forde, Mr. Chifley, Mr. Beasley, Mr. Makin, Mr. Drakeford, Mr. Dedman, Mr. Ward and Mr. Dalton, High Commissioner to New Zealand. New Zealand was represented by Mr. Fraser (Prime Minister), Mr. Jones, Mr. Webb and Mr. Berendsen, New Zealand High Commissioner to Australia. Addressing the conference on January 18, Mr. Curtin said that security in the south-west Pacific region would best be achieved by a defensive system based on the island screen north of both Dominions. This defence involved co-operation with the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands, France and Portugal. The purpose of this system of defence was to preserve the strategic isolation of Australia and New Zealand. In friendly hands the islands were a bulwark for defence, but in hostile hands they would be a spring-board for attack against Australia. The crux of the situation was the capacity of the two Dominions to provide for the defence of the screen and of their mainlands, and co-operation with Britain was therefore essential.

The text of the agreement issued on January 21 contained 44 clauses, 42 of them of a substantive character. Their general effect was summed up as follows by the Correspondent of *The Times* at Canberra (*loc. cit.* January 22).

Australia and New Zealand claim full responsibility for policing or sharing in the policing of such areas in the south-west and south Pacific as

¹ Nevertheless stories to that effect had been repeated by American politicians and had reached Congress.

may be decided within the general framework of a system of world security. A regional zone of defence, comprising the south and south-west Pacific areas, based on Australia and New Zealand and extending through the arc of islands north-north-east of Australia to western Samoa and the Cook Islands, is provided under the terms of the agreement.

It is agreed that a conference of Powers interested in the Pacific shall be called to exchange views on problems of security, post-war development, and native welfare. The two Governments agree that in the peace settlement they will support each other in maintaining the accepted principle that every Government has the right to control immigration in all territories within its jurisdiction. The two Governments will act together on matters of common concern in the south-west and south Pacific areas, and representation at the highest level will be sought on all armistice-planning and executive bodies. They agree that a full settlement should be made respecting all our enemies after hostilities with all have concluded.

They regard it as a matter of cardinal importance that they be associated in the membership and planning of the general international organization referred to in the Moscow declaration of October, 1943. They accept as a recognized principle the international practice that the construction and use in war-time by any Power of naval, military, and air installations in the territory of another Power does not itself afford a basis for territorial claims or rights of sovereignty or control after the conclusion of hostilities. In the event of failure to obtain a satisfactory international air agreement they will support a system of air trunk routes controlled by the Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations under government ownership.

Commenting on the agreement, the Correspondent of *The Times* at Canberra observed (*loc. cit.* January 24) that it was, in effect, a loose confederation of two Dominions for the purpose of foreign policy. Special importance was given to four provisions of the agreement, to wit :

(1) The declaration that the final peace settlement should be made in respect of all the enemies of the Allies after all hostilities have been concluded. The declaration made by the Allied leaders in Cairo in December, about which Australia was not consulted in spite of its bearing on the Pacific balance of power, was regarded in the two Dominions as a piecemeal treatment of the post-war situation rather than as a comprehensive treatment of a single world-problem, the necessity for which had been frequently emphasized by the two Dominions.

(2) The declaration that the use by one Power in war of the territory of another should not provide a basis for subsequent territorial claims. In this the conference had in mind extremist claims such as those of certain U.S. Congressmen, who had urged that American sovereignty should be extended after the war over places where American blood had been shed or that the United States should have rights over war installations, such as airfields or docks constructed in many parts of the world.

(3) The call to the nations to avoid further occasions of strife by international agreements on the operation of the world's chief air routes. It was the first occasion on which such a lead had been given and it was regarded as crucial by the two Dominion Governments, who felt that unless international air lines were divested of proprietary interests there could be no avoidance of that dangerous chaos of competition of which South America furnishes examples and warnings.

(4) The clauses providing for the disposal of hostile territories as a part of the general Pacific settlement and declaring that no change in the sovereignty or control of Pacific islands should be made without the consent of the two Dominions. This obviously referred to enemy territories, e.g., the Caroline Islands, lying north of the Equator, which the two Governments regard as of vital importance to their security. As for the islands south of the Equator, the two Governments regarded these as falling within the regional zone of defence, but in fixing this they had no intention of laying claims to the control of such as were under the sovereignty of other nations, such as New Caledonia, or Dutch New Guinea. It was rather their hope that they would be able to collaborate with the other nations concerned in establishing this regional zone within the wider framework of a system of world security.

The agreement, which was ratified by the Cabinet on January 25, encountered some criticism on the ground that it had attempted too much and too soon, since the Great Powers were likely to have the last word in Pacific decisions and, in any case, Australia and New Zealand would be unable to secure their proposed defensive line without the aid of Great Britain and the United States. But it was generally held by the Press that the agreement was an important affirmation of the common interest of the two Dominions, and that no harm was done by proclaiming their views and by relying on consultation and negotiation to reach satisfactory settlements. It was made known later at Canberra that neither the United States nor the Canadian Governments favoured the proposal of the two Dominions to convene a conference of Governments interested in the south and south-west Pacific to discuss regional collaboration. Washington felt that it would be inexpedient to conclude any agreement to which Russia would not be a party, and that any such conference should be summoned at the initiative of the United States.

Mr. Curtin's outline of a plan for full and continuous consultation between members of the Commonwealth, which the Labour Party had adopted unanimously¹ on December 15, continued to arouse much interest in the Commonwealth. Mr. Fraser, the New Zealand Premier, publicly supported it on his arrival in Canberra, and took the line that the closest co-operation between the constituents of the British Empire would benefit the world as well as the Empire itself. In a speech at the Australian

¹ cf. *The Seventeenth Quarter*, Chapter XII, Australia.

Institute of Political Science at Canberra on January 31, Mr. Menzies urged that Australian security after the war must depend on her joining some collective system giving her powerful friends and allies.

He was critical of the agreement with New Zealand on the ground that the two Dominions alone were not strong enough to carry it out and that so comprehensive an agreement involving the setting out of mutual rights and obligations among the numerous Pacific interests would require years to negotiate. He urged the rejection of a doctrine of mere force and warned his audience against those who maintained that the only way to ensure peace was "to get Germany and Japan down and to keep them down." Australia must struggle towards collective security.

On the question of Australia's foreign policy he said that neither the Balfour Declaration nor the Statute of Westminster had settled the problem of Empire Government. If Australians really believed in their race and in a great association of peoples under the King, then they must face the fact that in questions of war and peace the British nations must have one broad policy and stand or fall by it. It was worth abandoning many theoretical rights on Australia's part in order to secure a cohesive British Empire. The balance of opinion seemed opposed to an Empire Cabinet, but there seemed no good reason against the setting-up of a committee of foreign policy, consisting of the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of each country of the Commonwealth.

Speaking on February 9, Mr. Curtin said that although the military situation in the south-west Pacific area had changed for the better during the last six months, and the pattern of victory could now be discerned, the factors which had brought about this improvement had produced new problems. New troops would be reaching Australia and there would be an expansion of demands for food, munitions, repair services, equipment, etc., which would require diversions and regroupings of man-power. He said that

the broad problem was to ensure a proper balance between the military and civilian effort while simultaneously bearing in mind the extent to which Australia must export foodstuffs to the United Kingdom and maintain supplies and services to the Allied forces. Australian capacity to meet all these requirements fell short of demands. No allocation of man-power between the various claimants could therefore remain static.¹

It was made known shortly afterwards that British as well as more United States troops would reach Australia before long, and it was generally expected that in consequence of the heavy strain on agriculture the Government would release more men from the army to the farms. Australian war production was impressive. There were

¹ *The Times*, February 10.

changes in emphasis—thus, while the production of the 25-pdr. field gun had diminished since large numbers were arriving from Great Britain, a short pack-howitzer of the same calibre was being produced, as were a powerful 17-pdr. "tank-buster," and a 4-in. naval gun and the Hispano 20 mm. cannon for Australian aircraft. New types of aircraft were also being built. Naval construction and still more naval repairs had made great strides. The Melbourne correspondent of *The Times* (*loc. cit.* March 14) gave several examples of the remarkable work done in the Australian dockyards. Here is one.

"One heavy cruiser came in with a quarter of her hull missing. Her forward decks and one turret had been cut off and her fuel tanks ruptured, and she had been shored up with timber buttresses to prevent her bulkheads collapsing. She was fitted with a new bow and made otherwise seaworthy and is again serving, though considerably shorter than originally."

Of the Parliamentary squalls of the quarter the most important arose from the Referendum Bill. The history of this measure, which gave new powers to the Federal Government which took precedence over the powers of the States and, if passed, would reduce the authority of their Parliaments, has been outlined in a previous volume (*cf. The Thirteenth Quarter*, pp. 273-74). The Premiers of the State Governments who had taken part in the Convention which met at Canberra in November, 1942, had all undertaken to introduce the Bill in its final and amended form to their own Parliaments and to do their utmost to ensure its passage. Unfortunately the Parliaments were divided. New South Wales and Queensland alone passed the Bill as it stood. The others passed it with further amendments or reservations or else rejected it. After a stormy all-night sitting during which one Opposition member was suspended and Opposition members thrice left the House in a body as a protest against "the bludgeoning tactics" of the Government, the Bill was finally passed by 44 votes to 18 in the early hours of March 16.

Coal strikes troubled Australia little less than they troubled Great Britain. In mid-February 3,500 miners struck work in the Coalcliffe colliery in New South Wales and remained on strike, disobeying the directions of the

Coal Commission and their own Union and flouting a recommendation of the Australasian Council of Trade Unions that they should resume work. After Mr. Curtin, in an emotional speech on March 8, had startled the House of Representatives by talking of resigning, his Government took over the Coalcliffe colliery, and on March 13 mass meetings of miners gave an aggregate vote in favour of returning to work. The strike had cost the country 17,000 tons of coal daily and, according to Mr. Curtin, the stoppages in some pits were frivolous and irrational.

On March 24 members of all parties in Parliament assembled to bid farewell to Mr. Curtin, who was soon to leave for London by way of the United States to attend the Prime Ministers' Conference in April. On March 17, the second anniversary of his arrival in Australia, General MacArthur received the insignia of the G.C.B. recently conferred on him by the King from the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, and was entertained at a State banquet at which Mr. Curtin, Mr. Menzies and Mr. Fadden were present.

On January 5 the Army Minister announced that the casualties of the Australian forces since the beginning of the war totalled 10,884 killed or died, 15,332 wounded, 3,784 missing and 25,895 prisoners of war.

South
Africa

General Smuts made several interesting speeches in the Dominion during the quarter. At Pretoria on January 7 he said that unless the Allies made some incalculable blunder 1944 would be the year of destiny and decision.

He criticized some South Africans for what was almost "day-dreaming" about peace questions. "The time-table," he said, "is as clear as daylight. Priority Number One is fighting this war." The second priority was the problem of demobilization, and peace plans came third. He wanted South Africa to maintain and, if possible, intensify the war effort, for he wished to end the war with victory and also with flying colours for the Dominion. In a speech during a Parliamentary debate on February 7 when proposals for a social security scheme costing £52,000,000 a year were discussed, he repeated his view as to the priorities. The Government would pursue their programme of social security within the framework of the existing social and economic system. It might be dangerous to depart from the system of private enterprise, though the State would step in where important basic industries could not find private capital to finance them.

On March 17, speaking in the Foreign Affairs debate in

Parliament, he virtually demanded the cession of the British protectorates in South Africa but outside the Union. Of these he said :

"Here we are, a Dominion, with sovereign independent status . . . but sandwiched in we have little territories which do not belong to us. These anomalies are broadcast all over the continent of Africa. I feel that something is due not only to South Africa but to Africa. We have taken a great part in the war, and the way this African contingent has tried to do its duty . . . entitles us to something."¹

Continuing, he said that he regarded the idea of the Commonwealth as one of the most valuable political conceptions of all time. The danger run by small countries had been shown by this war. Had South Africa not had the protection of the British Fleet and the other members of the Commonwealth, it would have been necessary to make defensive alliances with other countries. Alone they would become the football of the Great Powers. He was opposed to the States of the Commonwealth seceding and becoming republics. He could not see how they could gain more liberty and more national sovereignty by further loosening the ties. He was, however, opposed to any scheme of Imperial Federation and he believed that the existing system had given satisfactory opportunities for consultation between the United Kingdom and the Dominions.

Of the coming Prime Ministers' Conference he said that he "would stand for Africa" there. He intended to see how South Africa could work with the others, with due consideration for the Union's point of view. Other Dominions had to face the same problem and to see how wisely the Commonwealth could weather the storms that lay ahead.

The financial state of the Union was decidedly satisfactory. On February 24 Mr. Hofmeyr, the Finance Minister, introduced what the taxpayer was inclined to call a "mercy budget." Faced by the necessity of raising an extra £5,000,000, he did not raise the income tax. The chief new taxes were :

Increases in death and succession duties ; surcharge on transfer duty ; extra stamp duties on stockbrokers' notes ; increased special contribution to the diamond mines ; and reduction in abatement for supertax. He also increased the excise on cigarettes, tobacco, matches, and wines, fortified or sparkling. He anticipated a yield of £112,000,000, half of which would be derived from revenue, and half by loan. On the current year he expected a surplus of £270,000, although the expenditure had exceeded estimates by over £10,000,000. Revenue had been remarkably buoyant during the past year, income-tax on individuals having exceeded estimates by

¹ The General did not say on what terms or with what status the Basutos, Swazis, or Bechuanas, who had enjoyed a considerable measure of local autonomy under British rule, would enter the South African Union were his suggestion accepted by the Imperial Government.

£1,440,000. Supertax, excess profits duty and death-duties had also exceeded estimates, in fact the only shortfall was in gold-mining taxation.

On March 15 General Smuts told the House of Assembly that the South African 6th (Armoured) Division was "now ready and about to take an active part in the fighting." The South African forces in the north now amounted to at least three divisions. The country's air force, which was mostly in Italy, was of divisional strength, and technical and ancillary troops represented another division. On February 1 General Smuts gave the total number of South African battle casualties since the beginning of the war as 21,256.

Colonel-Commandant W. R. Collins, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry to the South African Government, died on February 28. Mr. G. N. Strauss, M.P., succeeded him on March 6.

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CHAPTER XII

INDIA

The quarter brought a marked intensification of operations against the enemy in Burma and the irruption into the Indian mainland for the first time of bodies of enemy troops, chiefly directed to attacks on Imphal, the capital of the Assam State of Manipur. These events gave point to Lord Wavell's declaration in his first "policy" speech to the bicameral Indian Legislature on February 17 that his first task in India was to "assist the South-East Asia Command to drive the enemy from the gates of India." He added with soldierly directness: "There can be no peace or prosperity for India or anyone else till the Japanese ambitions are utterly destroyed." He spoke of the time when, with Germany defeated, the war against Japan could be intensified, and of the need for careful training and preparation to surmount the physical difficulties of the reconquest of Burma and other territory in Japanese occupation.

With the heavy toll taken by the Bengal famine in mind, the Viceroy pointed out that to maintain the stability needed for victory India must solve her economic problems. He outlined the efforts of his Government to organize food production and distribution on an all-India basis. The key-points in the plan were the strict supervision of dealers under the Food-grains Control Order, the avoidance of competitive buying in the procurement of Government requirements, statutory price control, rationing in the larger towns and control over movements. The intimation that the situation in Bengal had improved was coupled with the warning that they must run no risk of repetition of the 1943 disaster.

Some three weeks earlier (Jan. 20), Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, had informed Parliament that as the result of relief measures and of an excellent winter rice crop there was now no general shortage of food in Bengal. The situation, however, remained anxious as the procurement and distribution of supplies were difficult. From unofficial sources came the statement that the difficulties were partly attributable to conflict of view between the Central and Bengal Governments.

The *News Chronicle* special correspondent (the late Mr. Stuart Emeny) reported (Jan. 24) that "muddle and inefficiency" in the province were such that unless drastic action was taken quickly Bengal might be faced with another famine. A more measured picture given by the Special Correspondent of *The Times* (Jan. 28) stated that there was now little difficulty in the supply of food. In the deficit districts, however, the peasants, as the result of their recent unhappy experience, were not selling their grain freely. It was felt that if future trouble was to be avoided the Government must build up substantial stocks to steady the markets and restore confidence.

The mortality balance-sheet was laid before the House of Commons on March 23. Mr. Amery stated that the recorded deaths in Bengal from all causes in 1943 numbered 1,873,749.

This exceeded the average recorded mortality during the previous five years by 688,846. This figure roughly represented the number of deaths due to starvation, malnutrition, and impaired resistance to disease, as well as to abnormal epidemic diseases not associated with malnutrition—and was thus the approximate measure of Bengal's economic disaster. Mr. Amery fitly added :

"I am glad, as all must be, that the very much larger figures quoted in some quarters have turned out to be erroneous. But I must not be understood as in any way minimizing the extent of an appalling calamity."

In pursuance of his view that India's economic problems must be solved, Lord Wavell intimated in his speech of Feb. 17 that his Government meant to prepare the way for India's post-war development with all earnestness of spirit, and with all the resources, official and non-official, which it could enlist.

The great aim must be to plan for economic and social development so as to raise the standard of living and general welfare. The matter was being dealt with by a committee of the Executive Council, assisted by a number of other committees with a strong unofficial element. Concurrently individual development officers were being appointed to draw up outline plans for subjects such as electrification, industries, road development, irrigation and agriculture.

Towards the end of the quarter Government issued a detailed plan, prepared by a conference of engineers of Provinces and States, for a ten-year programme to provide the country (consisting largely of almost roadless rural areas) with 400,000 miles of roads at a total cost of

Rs.450 crores (£375,000,000). One of the principal authors of the scheme, Mr. Vesugar, a Parsi, Chief Engineer to the Punjab Government, was later appointed Industrial Adviser to the Central Government. In his Budget speech at the end of February, Sir Jeremy Raisman, the Finance Member, announced the provision of a crore of rupees (£750,000) for industrial research ; and a gift of one-fifth of that amount was contributed by the Tata Trust.

That India will be in a favourable financial position for development was a deduction to be drawn from the Budget statement. The defence expenditure for the closing year was estimated roundly at £197,000,000 and for 1944-5 at £207,500,000, out of a total central expenditure of £272,000,000. The Finance Member stated, in reply to criticisms, that India bears no part of the cost of operations beyond her frontiers ; nor does she provide the full cost of her own defence. The cost of troops serving in Burma—Indians and others—is met by H.M. Government. India bears the cost of certain forces raised and maintained within the country and available for local defence. She also pays for equipping them with such resources as she herself provides. The armies which are reinforcing the defence of India inside her frontiers (including British and American reinforcements) are equipped with all the paraphernalia of modern war ; but she has not paid for that equipment as it is not produced in India. In so far as it is drawn from the U.S.A. it comes under the Lend-Lease arrangements, whereby India affords reciprocal aid. Sir Jeremy stated that Lord Wavell, when Commander-in-Chief in India, definitely determined what he regarded as the forces adequate for the local defence of India. The present Commander-in-Chief had carefully reviewed those ceilings, and stated what, in his considered judgment, were the forces required for the purpose. Forces exceeding those ceilings are charged to H.M. Government.

Under this favourable bargain (negotiated before Japan invaded Burma) India, in the words of a writer to the *Financial Times* (March 15), is one of the few countries

which have benefited financially as a result of participation in the war.

"Yet, with all, she enjoys the unenviable distinction among members of the British Commonwealth of Nations of presenting the greatest measure of monetary inflation and the steepest rise in prices." Not only has her sterling debt which stood at £376,000,000 in the summer of 1939 been wiped out, but the sterling balances of Government held by the Reserve Bank of India also stood on March 31 at no less than £710,000,000. The note circulation continues to grow and at the end of the quarter amounted to £662,000,000. Government has resorted to the sale of gold provided by the British and the U.S.A. Treasuries in order to help to meet their war expenditure in India.

The dangers of inflation seem to be taken optimistically in a much-discussed scheme of economic development known as the Bombay plan, sponsored by the heads of the great Tata and Birla firms, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas and other large industrialists. It proposes an expenditure of no less than £7,500,000,000 in the next 15 years to provide for a five-fold industrial expansion and the doubling of agricultural production. While the plan received the endorsement of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce when it met at Delhi early in March, it was criticized in many quarters on both political and economic grounds. Sir Jeremy Raisman, the Finance Member, expressed grave misgivings in the Legislative Assembly as to the inflationary effect of the plan, and pointed to the risk of financial and economic collapse before the objective of vastly increased industrial output was reached. The guardians of the Indian cultivator took the view that under the scheme "big business" would be in a position to dictate the price of food and raw material bought from the small farmer, and also of the manufactures sold to him in exchange. The Moslem Press opposed the project as it contemplated government of India as one unit, which to them means a pro-Congress Hindu *raj*.

The Viceroy, in a brief reference in his speech to the Legislature, remarked that Government welcomed constructive suggestions, and were examining the scheme with interest. They might differ on the methods to be employed, their relative importance to the plan as a whole, the part to be played by the State and by private enterprise, and on the financial practicability of development on the scale contemplated within the time suggested by the authors; "but our aim is similar and we welcome any sincere contribution to the problem that sets people thinking and makes them realize both the possibilities and the pitfalls ahead of us."

Lord Wavell coupled his appeal for co-operation in the political as well as the economic field with a clear indication that he looks to the ultimate satisfaction of Indian constitutional aims as the goal of the mission entrusted to him—but with victory ranking first. The Cripps offer in the spring of 1942 was made, he said, not in any panic when Japan was threatening India, but in the hope that when the war had come so close to India and threatened her national life it might arouse, as in other countries, a spirit of unity and co-operation that would have overridden political differences in the hour of danger. The offer was still open to those who had a genuine desire to further the prosecution of the war and the welfare of India.

“But the demand for release of those leaders who are in detention is an utterly barren one until there is some sign on their part of willingness to co-operate. It needs no consultation with anyone or anything but his own conscience for any one of those under detention to decide whether he will withdraw from the Quit India resolution and the policy of mass civil disobedience which had such tragic consequences, and will co-operate in the tasks ahead.”

This stout refusal to respond to repeated pleas for unconditional release was much criticized in the pro-Congress Press ; but it was accompanied by one important move forward. For the first time from any official quarter, Lord Wavell expressed approval of the frequently suggested idea of a preliminary examination of the constitutional problem by an authoritative body of Indians. Government would be ready to give this body every assistance it might desire in carrying out its task. The framing of a new constitution was essentially and properly an Indian responsibility. “Until they can agree on its form the transfer of power cannot be made.”

A month earlier a step was taken to meet objections to the continued detention of internees without trial or review of their cases. On January 13, when the number of such persons had been reduced to under 5,000, an Ordinance was issued providing that all detention orders must be reviewed at six-monthly intervals, and would then terminate unless specifically extended. Any person detained has to be informed of the grounds for detention,

and to be given every facility to make representations against the order.

Mrs. Gandhi, who shared her husband's segregation at Poona, died from heart failure on February 22 at the age of 74. She had the traditional reverence of the Hindu wife for her spouse, but had little or no influence on his ideas and policy. She was first and last a meek and patient wife and mother, proud of, but only vaguely understanding, the enormous influence of her Mahatma partner in life. Questions of her release on grounds of health raised early in the year were met by the official statement that it would be unkind to part her from her husband and that at the Aga Khan's palace at Poona she had the services of an eminent heart specialist.

A negative form of co-operation was provided by the return to the Legislative Assembly for the Budget session of a number of Congress members under their leader Mr. Bulabhai Desai, after a boycott begun in the summer of 1939, and only technically departed from by brief and silent appearances at intervals to draw allowances and avoid vacation of seats by non-attendance over prescribed periods. They now actively debated proposals of Government in a hostile spirit. With the assistance of Moslem League members, they inflicted several defeats on Budget proposals. It was stated that the rejection of the Finance Bill on March 28 by the narrow margin of one vote was not meant to imply opposition to the war effort, but only as the refusal of supplies to a Government which did not command the confidence of the people. The Viceroy's certification of the Measure at the end of the quarter was no more than a return to a practice required from his predecessors from Lord Reading's days, and only demitted in the war years by reason of the absence of the Congress Opposition.

Early in the quarter Sir Firoz Khan Noon, the Defence Member, was selected to be a representative of India at the War Cabinet, and in March came the announcement that he would be joined by Lieut.-General the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, one of the most generous supporters of the war effort among the Indian Princes.

Appointments made to the Viceroy's Council at the same time maintained the balance of 11 Indian and three British ordinary Members of that body. Mr. Robert F. Mudie, acting Governor of Bihar, was chosen to succeed Sir Reginald Maxwell as Home Member ; Sir Jeremy Raisman's tenure of the Finance Membership was extended (it was understood for a year) and Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, the Supply Member, was continued in office on completion of five years in the Council.

The enhancement of India's military renown in so many theatres of war was purchased at no small cost in blood and suffering. An official statement of Empire losses in the first four years of war (*The Times*, April 5, 1944), showed a total for India of 5,912 killed, 17,810 missing, 13,230 wounded, and 72,848 prisoners of war, making in all 109,800. India's lascar crews form a substantial proportion of the merchant navy in British ships registered in the United Kingdom and so are included in the figure of 26,317 deaths recorded from war conditions in the first four years of belligerency.

At the close of the quarter the India (Attachment of States) Act was placed on the Statute Book at Westminster. Its purpose was to validate orders issued in April, 1943, by the Viceroy—in his capacity as Crown Representative for the Affairs of the Indian States—for the attachment of some hundreds of petty jurisdictions, possessing varying degrees of sovereignty, in Kathiawar and Gujerat to neighbouring large principalities. The orders took effect in the following August, but in December the local Agency Court held that they were *ultra vires*. The case for the Measure was not only the administrative confusion to which annulment of the orders would give rise, but also the impossibility of the provision by the chiefs and taluqdars affected from their small revenues of schools, hospitals, communications and other amenities of modern government. The substantial States to which they have been attached are under obligation to provide these services for the benefit of the 800,000 inhabitants and the largest principality, Baroda, led the way in making substantial financial provision by permanently assigning revenues for these purposes.

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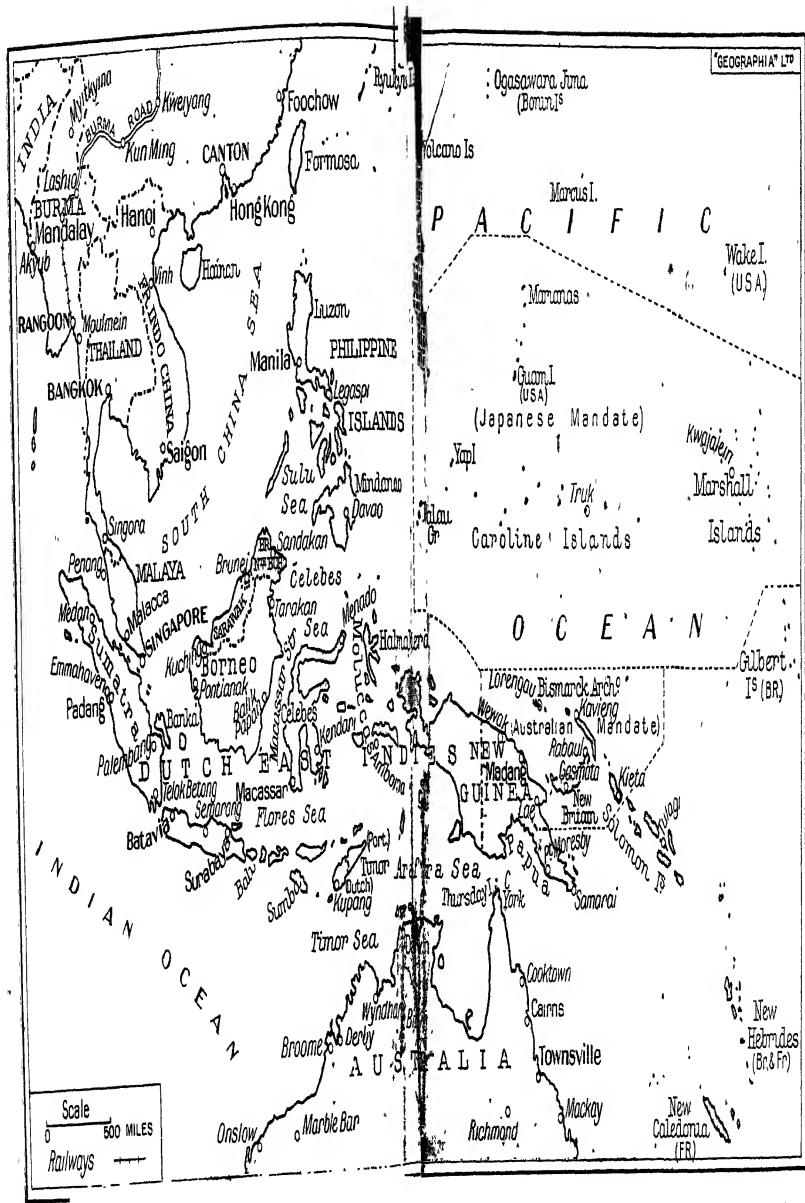
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